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THE
PAVILION.

A NOVEL.

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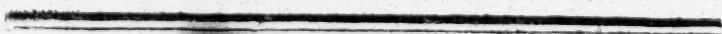
A
NOVEL.



IN FOUR VOLUMES.



VOL. II.



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THE
PAVILION.

CHAP. I.

The Powers of Harmony.—An Introduction, and a Discussion, with rather more ill than good Humour in it.

THE next day Lord Beaufort attended Miss Corbet and Miss Lyttleton, who went to enquire after Ethelinda. The former of those ladies had never less inclination to pay a civil visit, but she could not in common decency avoid it.

They found our heroine a great deal better, and in two or three days she was so far

VOL. II.

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recovered,

recovered, that the surgeon gave leave for her removal.

Indeed, her time had passed very uncomfortably in every respect. She had, to be sure, necessaries, but had none of those kind attentions which are so peculiarly consoling in sickness. Miss Lyttleton was the only person from whom she received any. Her kindness made the inattention of others still more marked, and she felt a degree of mortification which considerably added to her wishes of quitting a family where she received so many slights, and made her resolve that it should not be long before she did so.

She expected a letter from Mr. Hall, and hoped for his advice ; but, at any rate, she determined upon writing^{ing} to Mrs. Fletcher, (late Mrs. Mansel,) and to fix upon some plan for removing from Langley-Park.

When she returned home, she made an excuse, which was readily received, for staying
ing

ing two or three days in her own room.— She could scarcely bring herself to join a party, who had all, excepting Miss Lytleton, treated her in so slighting a manner. However, on the fourth day, she determined to appear below.

She had from her window observed Mr. Corbet and other gentlemen go out on horseback; and, as the day was extremely fine, she ordered a servant to take her harp, and went to her favourite arbour. She looked in the highest beauty, and a degree of languor, caused by her late confinement, yet remained upon her countenance, that made her appear more than usually interesting.

Lord Beaufort was not of the riding party, having had letters to write, but had partly promised to meet them as they returned; and was now strolling along the wood, when he was surprised by the sound of music.

He advanced quietly towards the place from whence the sound came ; and, as he was passionately fond of music, he was quite delighted with the skill of the performer, and with the finest voice he had ever heard.

When the song ended, he continued fixed to the spot, eager to know who it was that performed so divinely, and yet afraid of intruding and interrupting.

He considered who it could be. Miss Corbet he had never heard play on the harp, and, besides, she was gone out. He therefore concluded it was Miss Lyttleton, and presented himself in the front of the temple.

Ethelinda had not heard him, and, on observing him there, arose hastily in the greatest surprise. They were indeed mutually distressed. Ethelinda was entirely ignorant who he was, but Lord Beaufort immediately guessed who she was, and in a
very

very graceful manner made a great many apologies for his intrusion. Ethelinda courted, blushed, and said she was just going away. Lord Beaufort declared he should not forgive himself, if he had disturbed her. "But I am happy (continued he) to find that an accident, so nearly fatal, has been attended with no worse consequences."

Ethelinda, still ignorant who it was that was speaking to her, slightly returned her thanks for his politeness, and was going out of the Temple, when Miss Lyttleton appeared.

"Oh, oh! my lord, (exclaimed she,) I find you do not wait for the ceremony of an introduction to Miss Claremont; though, to be sure, you did introduce yourself before in a manner that, if she has any gratitude, will make her forgive the omission of trifling ceremonies."

"Every introduction to Miss Claremont (replied Lord Beaufort) must be coveted, and I shall thank Miss Lyttleton for now letting me have that honour."

“ Well, then, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) behold, my dear Miss Claremont, in this gallant youth, whom I have the honour of calling cousin, the hero that saved you from destruction ; and, I dare say I may add, that he would again be ready to sacrifice himself in your service. I think he looks as if he would.”

“ I am most extremely grateful to Lord Beaufort (answered Ethelinda,) for the risk he has already run, and hope his humanity will never again be taxed on my account.”

“ Indeed, (replied Lord Beaufort,) if you knew the happiness I receive from having been the accidental instrument of preventing the danger that threatened you, you would not call it taxation. The being ready to assist any one in such a situation can very little deserve commendation ; but, when I see what has been preserved, I am indeed thankful for having been in any wise instrumental to so general a good.”

“ Come,

“Come, come, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) you are flourishing away, my lord, at a fine rate, seemingly quite forgetful of my prophecies ; but take care, or they will be very rapidly verified, I see.”

Lord Beaufort smiled, and bowed to Miss Lyttleton, but gave the conversation a different turn, by requesting her to prevail upon Miss Claremont to repeat the air she had been playing, so elegantly set by Mr. Stevens.

The words were,

Love, with all thy tender woes,
Never point thy dart at me ;
Oh ! disturb not my repose ;—
Let me from thy snares be free.

She sung the air with exquisite taste. Lord Beaufort seemed quite enchanted, and Miss Lyttleton cried out, “ Well, Miss Claremont certainly meant that as a prayer for your safety, my lord.”

“How far Miss Claremont’s prayers on that point (replied Lord Beaufort) may be efficacious, perhaps remains to be determined; but I hope she will so far grant mine, as to indulge us with another air.”

At this instant, Mr. and Miss Corbet made their appearance. They had been informed, upon enquiring for Miss Lyttleton, which way she had walked, and followed her, but did not expect to meet exactly the party they found.

The countenance of Miss Corbet expressed her surprise. Mr. Corbet’s was better disguised. He congratulated Miss Claremont upon her perfect recovery, as did Miss Corbet, though in an evidently cold manner.

“I am quite astonished (said she) at your so soon venturing out of doors.”

“The last two or three days of my confinement (answered Miss Claremont) were sacrificed

sacrificed more to prudence than necessity, and the fineness of this day would, I thought, secure me from any danger."

"If that were a general security, (cried Miss Lyttleton, giving a fly look at Lord Beaufort,) it would be very fortunate."

"Well, suppose we walk to the cottage, (cried Miss Corbet,) unless you choose to stay here any longer."

"I must wish you a good morning, (said Ethelinda,) as I have a letter I wish to finish."

"Just as you please," answered Miss Corbet.

"But we may as well walk with you to the house," said Miss Lyttleton.

"No! (cried Ethelinda;) I must insist upon your not regarding me; or, sooner than interrupt your walk, I will be of the party."

“That is a great temptation in the way of our politeness,” replied Lord Beaufort.

“No, (cried Miss Corbet;) let Miss Claremont do as she pleases, pray.”

“Well, go along then, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) that we may talk you over when you are gone.”

“I will trust to your mercy,” answered Ethelinda, and away she went towards the house.

“Well, my lord, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) I am inclined to believe you will, in future, pay a little more respect to my judgment than you have done hitherto. Don’t you think it would have been as well for mankind if Miss Claremont had broken her neck.”

“That you have great penetration, my sweet cousin, as I have told you before, I have not to learn; though, in the present instance, I hope you are mistaken; and I
could

ould not at any rate bring myself to wish for so cruel a catastrophe, even for the peace of mankind."

"Well, but tell me if you do not think her divinely handsome?"

"Yes, most certainly she is extremely handsome, — divinely handsome if you please."

"Yes, I do please, and so, I dare say, does Miss Corbet; but it is not every pretty woman would be pleased at being forced to acknowledge such superior charms, would they, Miss Corbet?"

"Whatever those charms may be, I see no occasion for comparisons, (cried Mr. Corbet;) and, for my part——."

"Come, now, (interrupted Miss Lytton,) what fib are you going to tell?"

"Fib!" echoed Mr. Corbet.

"Yes, fib! for it is nothing else, if you pretend to say that you do not think her a charming creature."

“ She is certainly a fine woman, (replied Mr. Corbet,) but your lively fancy——.”

“ Well, (interrupted Miss Corbet,) don't let us dispute any longer about beauty, pray. It is deemed desirable to have it, though sometimes, I believe, women would be better without it.”

She then turned to Lord Beaufort, and accused him of not having kept his promise of meeting them on horseback.

“ Meeting you ! (exclaimed Miss Lyttleton ;) no, to be sure : he was much better entertained this hot day, with sitting in the cool fragrant Temple, listening to Miss Claremont's melodious voice.”

“ What ! she has been singing ?” cried Mr. Corbet.

“ How do you think she sings, my lord ?” said Miss Lyttleton.

“ I think I never heard so fine a voice in my life, and she has been excellently well taught.”

“ D

“ Do you like the harp? (cried Miss Corbet;) for my part, it is not an instrument that pleases me.”

“ I am sorry to differ with you, (replied Lord Beaufort;) but I think it a delightful one, and particularly well adapted for accompanying the voice.”

The conversation was then interrupted by Lord John and Mr. Webster, who joined the party, which we shall leave, to return in the following chapter to Ethelinda.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Duplicity in a *tête-à-tête*,—Sincerity in a Letter,—and some rough Casuistry in an Argument.

ETHELINDA had resolved to write to Mrs. Fletcher ; but, upon returning to her own room, felt rather disposed to defer it till the next day, determined however that, if a very apparent change in the behaviour of the Corbet family did not take place towards her, she would very soon put her design of leaving them into execution.

She appeared at dinner, when every body happened to be in particular good-humour, and

and this day passed off uncommonly well, as did several others.

Miss Lyttleton had contracted a sincere regard for Ethelinda. Though she would sacrifice any body's ease to a joke, she was not at heart ill-natured,—and could distinguish characters, and discriminate, when she chose to give herself time to do so, as well as any one. She hated the Corbets: she saw through their intentions in regard to herself; and, disliking Mr. Corbet, had infinite pleasure in mortifying them all. She likewise discovered Miss Corbet's designs relative to Lord Beaufort, and her jealousy of our heroine, and she thought the behaviour of the whole family towards Ethelinda unpardonable.

Lady Cecilia was no longer able to disguise her feelings; and Miss Lyttleton, though she had not any serious idea of Lord Beaufort's having any partiality for Ethelinda, chose to let it appear as if she believed he had, on purpose to plague Miss Corbet,

Corbet, whom she particularly disliked, and the more, from having behaved ill to a friend of her's, whom she much esteemed.

Lady Cecilia, though free from suspicion of her son's having any real attachment to Miss Claremont, was yet not quite satisfied with his conduct to Miss Lyttleton, whose large fortune was the object of her ladyship's earnest wishes. There was an indifference in his manner to Miss Lyttleton, or a constrained attention, that evidently shewed his heart was untouched by her. Notwithstanding Mr. Corbet could dissemble with infinite art, yet it requires almost supernatural power to be for a considerable length of time guarded at all points. He was an adept, it was true, in deceit; but deceit will occasionally be forgetful, and even foil itself.

Lady Cecilia, ever watchful for her purpose, was often chagrined by Mr. Corbet's behaviour to Miss Lyttleton. In fact, though he loved money, he had not made

up

up his mind as to that lady ; but he, at all events, thought it better for the present seemingly to acquiesce in his mother's plans, because they would cover his own. He determined, however, to keep clear of all éclaircissements, though he wished rather to make such an impression on Miss Lytton as could do him no harm, and might give him the power of acting as he pleased in future.

He had happened to be alone that morning with Lady Cecilia, who asked him how he came not to ride, as she observed several of the gentlemen and Miss Lytton had been gone some time.

“ I believe, madam, (replied Mr. Corbet,) for no other reason than because I liked better to stay at home.”

“ Corbet, (returned Lady Cecilia,) I feel hurt at some part of your conduct, and wish to have a few words with you on the subject.”

Mr.

Mr. Corbet felt alarmed, though he hardly thought it possible Lady Cecilia should dive into his secret views relative to Miss Claremont. — But guilt, ever apprehensive, now alarmed him upon that account.

He answered, with that respect which, from custom and good-breeding, he had never lost sight of towards his mother, that he was always happy to attend to any thing she wished to say.

“ Why, I will come immediately to the point, Corbet. You are not ignorant of our wishes relative to Miss Lyttleton, and I am hurt at observing you take no pains to accelerate them.”

Mr. Corbet, happy at not hearing a word concerning Ethelinda, assured Lady Cecilia that he wished to obey her upon the subject she had mentioned, but affairs of that sort must take their time, and any hurry might be likely to defeat his purpose, for she must know, Miss Lyttleton was not a woman easily to be gained.

“ But,

“ But, Corbet, (returned her ladyship,) what I complain of is a deficiency in such attentions as are necessary towards attaching any woman. I have no uneasiness on account of Miss Claremont, for I am convinced you have too much proper pride to suffer any blandishments of her's to affect you ; but I own I should be pleased to observe more pointed assiduities towards Miss Lyttleton.”

Mr. Corbet was going to reply, when Sir James entered the room, wishing to speak to him upon business ; and he was thus happily released from this distressing tête-à-tête.

At dinner it was proposed by Lord John to make up a little dance in the evening.— Miss Lyttleton seconded the proposal, and two or three village-misses, who were taken notice of upon such occasions, were sent to, and came in time to be useful at the dance.

Lord

Lord Beaufort, after having danced with Miss Corbet, asked Ethelinda. Indeed his eyes, during the two first dances, acknowledged her superiority in that accomplishment.

Miss Corbet surveyed her with envy, and Mr. Corbet with restrained admiration. In truth, the conflict, and necessary concealment, of his passions, made his feelings not very enviable. Lord John was forced to allow, contrary to what he considered as an invariable rule, that grace and elegance, in one instance, appeared where family honours and advantages were deficient ; but, to pay his court to Miss Corbet, he took care sufficiently to slight Ethelinda.

Ethelinda, however, had never found any time pass so agreeably since she came to Langley-Park, as the last week had done. In fact, Lord Beaufort gave pleasure to every party in which he appeared. His superior and entertaining sense, his natural politeness, his elegant manners, and his distinguishing

guishing taste were all calculated to improve society, and they could not fail of having their due weight on such a mind as Ethelinda's. She had never before heard sentiments, or seen manners, so correspondent to her own, and his opinion of her will be seen in the following letter.

To Sir William Fauconberg, Bart.'

Langley-Park.

YOUR letter, dear Fauconberg, very naturally enquires, where am I? what am I about? Why do I so long delay my promise to you? The answers are not so readily given, and to be explicit I must be prolix. The date of my letter will answer your first question, and the reason of my being here was to fulfil a promise I made at the Spa, to relations that I till now knew but very little of; and most heartily do I now wish that I knew still less of them.

Consanguinity

Consanguinity was always, in my opinion, the weakest of ties. To parents, indeed, we owe obligations that must for ever bind us; but they are the only natural ties that cannot be cancelled. To every other kind of relation I consider myself as bound only according to their behaviour towards me. If it tend to promote my welfare or happiness, relationship makes the tie of gratitude stronger; but, if otherwise, it sets them at a greater distance from me than strangers would be, as I had a right to expect more from them. To a cause of this kind, in my family, I owe the very slight, or no, acquaintance I had with the Corbets. But chance threw us together at Spa. Their civil attentions to me required some return, and to that is my present visit owing.

To your second question, What am I about? I hardly know what to answer.—Falling most romantically in love, I believe, and perhaps playing the devil in the family where I am! for I seem to be creating

ting envy, jealousy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Do not think I mean to do all this, but I am cruelly afraid, though not much given to flatter myself, that, for my sins, one lady, whom I cannot like, is so kind as to be very partial to me; and another, whom I could adore, is so cruel as to be very indifferent towards me.

I now need not add why I delay my promise. When I shall perform it, I know not; and yet I believe, in my serious reflections, that, were I wise, I should fly from this place as fast as possible, before my heart is quite a prey to a passion that seems daily increasing.

You will be surprised at this confession, knowing that I have hitherto, except in one instance, made a tolerable defence against the battery of female charms. But here are charms, Fauconberg, that would vanquish a much more valiant knight than I profess myself to be. In short, here is a Miss Claremont, (heaven only knows who she is,)

is, who is all fascination. You love descriptions, and I will now indulge you.

She seems to be about seventeen, is rather tall, and, though sufficiently en bon point, is the most elegant figure I ever beheld. There is an expression in her countenance that absolutely reveals her thoughts, and her face has at times so much illumination and vivacity, and at others so uncommon a sensibility, as makes it impossible to converse with her for half an hour, without being unusually interested. Add to all this, an apparently-excellent heart, with a very superior understanding, uncommonly well cultivated; and then add the finest voice in the world, with great skill in music, and excellence upon the harp.

Conclude all, by heartily pitying your ill-starred friend, who is accidentally thrown in the way of such a luminary. I say, pity him; for you must know that I think it shines, or would shine upon another. In short, I have some reason to believe that

Corbet

Corbet loves this sweet girl ; and, though there is a shyness in her manner towards him, yet I fancy that arises from almost a certainty that his friends would not acquiesce in his choice, for there is an evident particularity in her manner with regard to him.

I met them yesterday morning : he had hold of her hand, which she endeavoured to disengage, I suppose, upon seeing me.— My blood absolutely ran cold ; and, though I have no right to be so, I am displeased ; and can hardly bear to see either of them since.

I think I shall only stay a few days longer. Caroline Lyttleton is here, as giddy and as odd as ever. She pretends to believe that Miss Claremont dislikes Corbet ; but it cannot be. Yet there is a something in their behaviour to each other that I cannot quite understand, nor can I help tormenting myself about it. If I were certain of their mutual attachment, I would banish

her from my mind. It is the uncertainty causes my perplexity; and yet, were she unattached, I ought not to think of her, for I am sure neither my mother nor the duke, who has been a father to me, would ever consent to such an alliance; for who she is seems a mystery to every body.

You shall hear from me again, when I have any thing to communicate, though it is more than possible that you may first see me.

I am,

Dear Fauconberg,

Faithfully your's,

BEAUFORT.

Ethelinda felt her aversion to Mr. Corbet daily increase His passion for her likewise increased, and he resolved to gratify it. He
however

however thought it might answer a good purpose to seem to renew the design, he had some time ago pretended to have formed, of going abroad again for a few months. At dinner, therefore, he let drop his intentions, adding that he should soon be obliged to go to London, to make some necessary preparations.

Lady Cecilia expressed her concern. Mr. Morgan began, as was usual with him upon that subject, to exclaim against the frequent excursions abroad. A warm altercation took place. Mr. Morgan declared he never should alter his opinion.

“That, my dear, (cried his lady,) no one suspects you of.”

“Why, I hate every thing that is unnatural, (replied the squire.) Nature never intended we should be scampering over seas and deserts into other countries, while there is room enough for us in our own, and the sea is our natural boundary. Come, Miss Claremont, you are less a friend to art than

most of your sex, I believe, what do you say to that ?”

“ I can say but little, sir, to a question introduced by a satire upon my sex ; and I must expect to incur a severe one upon myself, if I should presume to oppose an opinion that seems so decided.”

“ No, faith ! (returned Mr. Morgan ;) I wish to hear whether you can defend people’s acting so absurdly. I think you have too much sense to approve of all sorts of follies, merely because they are the fashion. That devilish thing, fashion, is the ruin of one’s comfort. It subverts nature ; it turns night into day, and day into night. It dresses you like a groom, or a merry-andrew. It half strangles you with cursed ragouts and dabs, that pall without satisfying your appetite ; and it makes you waste your time with people you don’t care a straw for, and in amusements you have no pleasure in. In short, fashion is a plague, a tyrant that I abominate. Give me nature, mere simple nature. I detest art of every sort.”

“ But

“ But (replied Miss Claremont) without some art, we should, I fear, find nature deficient.”

“ Never, never ! (cried the squire,) if she were left to herself.”

“ Indeed, (returned Miss Claremont,) I must differ with you ; for I think even the bounds, that you seem to imagine were meant to confine the inhabitants of each country, must, in one view, be considered as a means of increasing the ingenuity of mankind ; and, however excellent nature is, it requires some assistance from art to correct what is bad, and perfect what is good ; as the ground, however fruitful, would be worth little untilled.”

“ Why, you are an excellent casuist, faith ! but not half grateful enough to nature, which has done so much for you.”

“ I must beg (said Ethelinda) to drop the argument.”

“ I believe, (cried Miss Corbet,) that most people, even Miss Claremont, is obliged to something besides nature ; for mere nature

cannot give education and elegance of manners, and what is any body without them."

"They often do a great deal of mischief, (cried Mr. Morgan, who felt himself piqued,) they increase people's faults instead of mending them, and make them conceited, affected, and ridiculous."

"They do not always, I believe, (said Miss Lyttleton,) conquer envy, jealousy, and other passions, that often appear just as predominant in a well-educated as in an ignorant mind."

"I believe (observed Lord Beaufort) that education, upon those points, is not strictly attended to as it ought to be."

The conversation was then interrupted by a servant giving Ethelinda a letter, which she immediately knew to come from her valued friend Mr. Hall. She put it in her pocket, and waited for the opportunity of reading it, till she had it in her power to retire from table.

As

As soon as our heroine was alone, she opened her letter, which was not only a kind consoling one from her worthy friend, but expressive of the greatest astonishment at Lady Falkner's will. He tells her, that his brother is at present so ill that he cannot leave him; that he fears, indeed, he cannot live; in which case, he shall return immediately to England, and render her every service in his power. In the mean time, he advises her to stay with Lady Cecilia, unless Mr. Corbet's behaviour to her should render it improper; and, should that happen, he says she must by all means seek some other asylum, and desires soon to hear from her regularly, and begs she will not fail to be very particular in telling him every thing that occurs relating to herself.

Ethelinda shed many tears over this welcome letter, which was the greatest comfort she had received since the death of Lady Falkner.

“Dearest and most excellent old man!
(said she to herself) you don't forsake me. You

are still willing to give comfort to the poor and friendless Ethelinda."

There is something in unexpected satisfaction that softens, as well as relieves the mind, and at first produces a kind of melancholy, though it may afterwards exhilarate the spirits. Ethelinda remained some time absorbed in contemplation, and did not return to the company till tea-time arrived.

She had presided at the tea-table ever since she came. Upon her entering the room, Miss Corbet said, "Come, Miss Claremont, we wanted you to make tea; the gentlemen have been impatient for it," though in fact they had but that minute entered.

"If I had known that I had been wanted, madam, (returned Ethelinda,) I would certainly have come sooner."

"Miss Claremont's correspondent has engaged her, I suppose," said Mr. Corbet, who

who wished to know from whom the letter, given to her at dinner, came.

“Whoever has had the happiness of engaging Miss Claremont’s attention is much to be envied,” said Lord Beaufort.”

“Come, Miss Claremont, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) why don’t you give these gentlemen your letter to read, and satisfy their curiosity at once.”

“It would not be any ways interesting to them, (replied Miss Claremont,) though it is very much so to me.”

“I don’t believe that, (answered Miss Lyttleton;) I dare say they would either of them give a great deal to see that letter. They look as if they would; is it not true, my lord?”

“I should certainly be happy at seeing any thing that can afford Miss Claremont pleasure, (said Lord Beaufort,) and much concerned to see any thing that would give her pain.”

“Oh! you wish to know which it did, my lord, do you? Miss Claremont, pray

be so good as to tell his lordship whether he is to feel happy or miserable."

"I cannot think (answered Ethelinda) that Lord Beaufort would feel either upon the present occasion."

"Do you then really think yourself and your concerns (half whispered Lord Beaufort) objects of such indifference?"

"Come, (cried Miss Corbet,) do have done teasing Miss Claremont about her letter; of what concern can it be to either of you?"

Just then Mr. Jennings came in, who had frequently, encouraged by Lady Cecilia, been there lately, and had shewed very particular and very disagreeable attention to Ethelinda.

C H A P. III.

Which contains a Proposal, a Rejection, and a Resolution.

DURING the afternoon, Mr. Jennings whispered a good deal to Lady Cecilia, and, when tea was over, they went together into another room. About an hour after, a servant told Ethelinda that his lady desired to speak with her.

She immediately obeyed, and went to the dressing-room, where she found her ladyship with an unusual smile upon her countenance.

“Come, and sit down, Miss Claremont, (said she,) I have something to tell you, which I hope will give you as much pleasure as it does me.”

Ethelinda looked surpris'd.

“Why, my dear, (said Lady Cecilia, in a softened voice,) Mr. Jennings, who, to be sure, is a very unexceptionable young man, and possesses a very genteel fortune, has happily taken such a liking to you, that he has commissioned me to tell you how much he admires you. He has been making most generous proposals, and such as I think you cannot have the slightest objection to; indeed, in your situation, it is being very fortunate.”

Ethelinda, who had felt greatly hurt and mortified at Lady Cecilia's manner of expressing herself, first coloured with indignation, but, immediately recollecting herself, said, “I am not, madam, yet so lowered as to accept of my bread in such a way;
and

and it could only be for bread that I could be supposed to think of marrying Mr. Jennings."

Lady Cecilia, who, in her heart, had not expected that Ethelinda would readily accept of him, though she had pretended to think otherwise, was in reality less surprised than she chose to appear, but extremely mortified with the apprehension that her plan seemed very unlikely to succeed. She, however, still hoped to bring it about.

"Upon my word, Miss Claremont, (cried she,) you astonish me. What, pray, are your expectations, and from whence do they arise, that you treat so advantageous an offer with such contempt? It is true, I would be your friend on my poor sister's account, but I shall think myself released from all claims you might have upon me, if, from caprice, you obstinately refuse such a settlement."

"I have never, madam, (answered Ethelinda, with spirit,) encouraged an idea that
you

you would make me long an incumbrance to you, nor do I desire that you should do so. Poor and destitute as I am, I have still the means of subsistence, and ——” but tears now forced their way, and stopped her unfinished sentence.

“ You put yourself in a violent passion, indeed !” cried Lady Cecilia.

“ Madam, I am not in a passion, (sobbed Ethelinda ;)— but I beg to retire ;” and, unopposed by Lady Cecilia, she quitted the apartment, and went to her own room, where she gave free vent to her tears.

She felt herself much degraded by Lady Cecilia’s so strongly urging her to marry, merely for her maintenance, a man so much her inferior, except in fortune, and one, whom she must despise.

The difference a few months had made in her situation came too forcibly to her mind, and the contrast produced very keen feelings, and affected her so much, that she
could

could not think of going down stairs again that night.

None of the ladies, except Miss Lyttleton, troubled themselves about her. Possibly they never missed her ; or, if they did, felt no sensation but that of pleasure at her absence. Not so the gentlemen. Lord Beaufort and Mr. Corbet both wished for her return, but fear of raising just suspicions prevented them from expressing it, and from making the enquiries after her they would otherwise naturally have done.

Miss Lyttleton was the only uninterested person ; and, when the evening was pretty far advanced, and she had been rattling with Lord Beaufort and Mr. Corbet, she suddenly exclaimed, " Pray what is become of Miss Claremont ? "

" Ah ! what can be become of her ? " echoed Lord Beaufort.

" My mother (said Miss Corbet) sent for her some time ago, and I suppose she is with her. "

" No,

“ No, (answered Miss Lyttleton;) that cannot be; for Lady Cecilia was here not a great while since.”

“ Well, then, (returned Miss Corbet,) I must give up the point, for I really know nothing of the matter; but I suppose she is not lost.”

“ Pity if she were, I am sure, (answered Miss Lyttleton;) do not you think so, my lord?—And you, Mr. Corbet, would think our party rather the worse, I believe.”

“ While you remained in it, (replied Mr. Corbet,) few losses would be felt.”

“ Few might be acknowledged, perhaps, (answered Miss Lyttleton;) but I will go in search of Miss Claremont, and tell her that you will both entertain us with dreaming of her, in case she does not come presently;” and away the volatile girl went, in search, as she said, of Ethelinda.

She knocked at her room-door; Ethelinda inquired who was there. “ It is I,
(cried

(cried Miss Lyttleton ;) won't you let me in? I have a great deal to say."

Ethelinda was very little disposed to hear any thing, much less a great deal, and was likewise very sorry to be seen with such swelled eyes. However, she could not venture to refuse admitting her, and therefore opened the door.

"Bless my heart! what is the matter?" exclaimed Miss Lyttleton.

"Oh! nothing! (answered Ethelinda.) I have not been very well."

"Why, you were very well just now. It is something else, I am sure of it."

"No, nothing of any very great consequence."

"Nothing of any consequence, (repeated Miss Lyttleton ;) then you may as well tell me what it is. Come, come, tell me at once; perhaps I can be of use, and, if I can, I certainly will; particularly if it will plague any of the family we live with, for you

you know I detest them all, excepting poor Sir James, and he is in fact nobody."

Ethelinda, who was too angry and too indignant to be perfectly prudent, saw no great reason why she should conceal the affront that had been offered her, and said that she had been extremely hurt by Lady Cecilia's having urged her in a very unkind manner, to marry a person in every respect disgusting to her.

"And that person, or rather brute, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) is Jennings."

"How came you to guess?" said Ethelinda.

"To guess! (answered Miss Lyttleton;) why, do you think I am blind, and have not seen the odious fellow's behaviour; and, what is more extraordinary, Lady Cecilia's encouragement of it? I suppose she is afraid of so bright a gem as you coming into her own family, and making them all, from the comparison, appear ten times worse than they do at present. I declare I will

go down this minute, and tell Corbet and Beaufort, and set them upon Lady Cecilia, and let them pull her to pieces for having so vile a thought."

"Oh! for heaven's sake! (cried Ethelinda, frightened out of her wits, and heartily repenting the having said so much,) I entreat you, my dear Miss Lyttleton, not to say a word on the subject. I must desire you not to mention the affair to any one. It cannot answer any good purpose, and would get me into a terrible scrape."

"But how can you (answered Miss Lyttleton,) be so foolish as to mind her. She might have made twenty such absurd proposals to me, and I should only have laughed at her."

"But (cried Ethelinda, with a deep sigh) our situations are very, very different."

"As for that, (returned Miss Lyttleton,) she treats you in a shameful manner. It is not in my power to mend your situation at present, but I certainly will when I can. In the mean time, my dear Miss Claremont, there is one thing I must mention, which is,

is, that I shall be happy to be your banker, and think you confer a great favour on me by making me so."

Ethelinda expressed the sincerest thanks to Miss Lyttleton for her kindness, but assured her that she had no occasion for any assistance of that nature.

"Well, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) only remember that you promise to call upon me, if ever the time should come that you have occasion to do it; but I must, and I will, plague Lady Cecilia for this vile plan of her's, which I see through, and so must every body. But it won't all do; for, were you out of the way, Lord Beaufort must have quite lost his senses, before he would think of that envious thing, Miss Corbet, in the manner Lady Cecilia and she so evidently wish him to do. However, come down to supper."

"No; I must beg to be excused; and I trust you will, if any one thinks it worth while to enquire after me, say that I am
not

not very well ; and I must again entreat you to be silent upon what I have told you ”

Ethelinda now again determined upon writing to Mrs. Fletcher, as she felt it would be impossible for her to live with any degree of comfort much longer in her present situation, and Mr. Corbet was likewise now become so impertinently importunate, that she could seldom stir without meeting him, and being subject to the avowal of his passion.

The next morning, at breakfast, Lady Cecilia mentioned having received some beautiful shells. Miss Lyttleton expressed a desire of seeing them, and asked Ethelinda to accompany her to the place where they were, which was a sort of half-made grotto, at some distance from the house. Ethelinda readily agreed, and Lord Beaufort desired to be of the party. Miss Corbet and her brother determined likewise to go with them ; and, when breakfast was over, they all sat out together.

As

As they returned home, the object of their walk turned the conversation upon natural curiosities.

“ You seem fond of shells, Lord Beaufort,” said Miss Lyttleton, carelessly.

“ Yes, (he replied ;) I am always interested by the curiosities of nature.”

“ And particularly so (answered Miss Lyttleton) by the beauties of nature, are you not, my lord ?” looking as she spoke full a Ethelinda.

“ Certainly, (replied his lordship ;) the value of a curiosity is increased by its beauty.”

“ No ; not always, my lord, in the eyes of a true virtuoso. For instance ; do you think a real good antiquarian would be so much pleased with looking at Miss Claremont, who, you know, must be allowed to be a natural beauty, as at a fine charming Egyptian mummy ? — So, after all, I perceive

THE PAVILION.

ceive that you are not a true antiquarian, for I am convinced you like modern beauties full as well as antiques."

"I have only to say, my lively cousin, that I hope, as long as I live, always to pay proper homage to wit and beauty, wherever I find them; and I am sure that, in this circle, I shall never be at a loss for objects of adoration."

"Prettily said, (replied Miss Lyttleton;) and, for those compliments to me, you shall be honoured by lugging me home, so give me you arm."

"But why do you take all the compliments to yourself, Miss Lyttleton?" exclaimed Miss Corbet.

"Because (replied Miss Lyttleton) the person, for whom they were particularly meant, and whom they best suit, will not take them; and being unwilling such pretty things should be lost, I collected them, lest they should be scattered about, and quite thrown away. Otherwise, be assured

I am

I am not vain enough to put myself in competition with Miss Claremont," who, upon the continuance of this conversation, had walked forward, regardless of what was passing.

"Why, I believe, (returned Miss Corbet, colouring,) you, no more than other people, are insensible of the good qualities you possess."

"Good qualities! (repeated Miss Lytleton;) we were speaking of wit and beauty. But, as for my good qualities, I believe, (continued she, laughing,) they are as brittle as glass, and, I fear, almost as easily destroyed. Now Miss Claremont's resembles a diamond, both in polish and duration.—Lord Beaufort, is she not the most charming woman in the world?"

"But why, (cried Miss Corbet,) to do Miss Claremont justice, is it necessary to speak so entirely in the superlative degree, and thereby lose sight of other people's merit?"

"Because

“Because (answered Miss Lyttleton) she is a phoenix, and her merits are superlative. Now be candid, Lord Beaufort; and tell me if they are not what I describe them to be?”

“I will not (replied Lord Beaufort, smiling) upon that point offend you by contradiction; but I believe, my sanguine cousin, it is wisest, in general, not to speak in superlatives; and, indeed, that manner of speaking often wounds either truth or prudence; for, don't you know, (continued he, again smiling,) that excessive praise excites envy, raises curiosity, and sets penetration to work, in hopes of discovering, that the merit of the exalted does not completely answer the value which is placed upon it.”

“Which, if discovered, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) the world would revolt from the imposture, and the flatterer and the flattered both appear ridiculous, and become victims to the malice of little minds; but, in the present case, (continued she, turning

to Miss Corbet,) we have nothing of that sort to fear."

By this time they had overtaken Miss Claremont, and were just arrived at the house. Lady Cecilia met them at the door, and desired Miss Claremont would go in, and write some letters for her, which, in fact, was only an excuse to have an opportunity of again entering upon the subject of Mr. Jennings's proposal; and, upon Miss Claremont's seeming resolutely determined not to listen to them, Lady Cecilia was almost outrageous.

She uttered the severest sarcasms, and told Ethelinda that she saw very clearly the reason of her refusing to listen to Mr. Jennings, whose offers were so advantageous, and, who was in every respect, a very proper and suitable connexion for her,—but she saw her views. "And let me advise you, (continued her ladyship, putting on a most scornful air,) to give them up. Believe me, child, they will not succeed.—

ceed.—Neither of the young men you aim at are quite foolish enough to be so easily trapped.”

Ethelinda, unable to bear such degrading insinuations with patience, replied with a firmness of spirit that she had not before shewn to her.

“How I ever came in a situation to require your ladyship’s protection and kindness is a mystery that possibly time may unravel. But no time will ever efface from my mind the manner in which that protection and kindness has been shewn to me.—Your unjust insinuations create no sentiment in my mind but the sincerest contempt ; and ——.”

She was going to tell her ladyship, that, as soon as she could inform Mrs. Fletcher of her intention, she was determined to leave Langley - Park, but was prevented in her intention by the entrance of company.

Ethelinda wished to receive a letter, which she every day expected from Mr. Hall ; and she knew that Mrs. Fletcher was just now upon a visit for a few days to some of her husband's relations, and therefore resolved to continue at Langley-Park, till she could hear that it would suit Mrs. Fletcher to receive her.

Ethelinda determined to write, however, by the next post, and acquaint that worthy woman with her unhappy situation, and intentions in consequence of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

A very short Chapter, which contains a great Deal of Sympathy.

ETHELINDA quitted the room ; and, lost in thought, walked into the park, and, hardly knowing which way she went, got into a lane, where she met a poor girl, who was running very hard, and crying exceedingly.

Ethelinda was struck by her appearance ; she stopped her, and asked her the cause of her uneasiness. “ O madam, (cried the poor girl,) my dear mother is dying, and there is no one to help her.”

D 3

“ Where

“Where is she? (interrogated Ethelinda,) and where are you going?”

“She lives in a cottage just by, at the valley, (answered the girl,) and I was going to get Betty Barnes, in case she is at home, to come and help my mother.”

Ethelinda immediately told the girl that she would go, and see if it were in her power to do any good.

Just then Lord Beaufort turned into the lane, and, seeing Ethelinda with a dirty girl, who was sobbing as if her heart would break, walked after them.

“May I be permitted to ask (cried he) where Miss Claremont is going in so great a hurry, and with such a companion?”

“Indeed, my lord, (answered Ethelinda,) I cannot tell you, for I don’t know.”

“If that be the case, (returned he,) I presume that I may be of the party.”

“If you please,” answered Ethelinda; and she then told him all the girl had said.”

The

The distance they had to go was about half a mile, and the quickness of their pace brought them very soon to the cottage. — When they entered, they saw a decent-looking woman to all appearance lying dead upon the ground.

Ethelinda, though extremely shocked, said, “ I am in hopes she is only in a fainting fit ;” and, having hartshorn in her pocket, she began applying it to the woman’s temples, and made the girl get some water, and, with a spoon, forced a little into her mouth. Lord Beaufort gave her all the assistance in his power, and in a few minutes they discovered signs of life. — They continued the applications, and she very soon opened her eyes, and spoke to them.

When she saw Ethelinda, she exclaimed, “ It is the same angel that saved me once before ! O good lady ! who could have thought that you should again have saved me from perishing ?”

D 4

“ What

“What do you mean, good woman? (cried Ethelinda.) Compose yourself; you are mistaken. She is not quite herself yet,” continued Ethelinda, turning to Lord Beaufort.

“Yes, I am, (replied the woman.) It was you who gave me money when I sat on the stile, with my heart almost broken, without a penny, and my landlord going that night to seize my bed, and all that I had in the world. You gave me money to save my things, and enough to buy cotton to spin with, and I have done very well ever since, till Jemmy went with Farmer Burton’s cattle to the fair. He has been gone these three days, and was only to have been gone one. I have made myself so unhappy, fearing some mishap has befallen him, that I believe my time is come, which I did not expect a great while yet.”

She then appeared so ill again, that Ethelinda asked what assistance she was to have, and, upon hearing it was an old woman in the next village, she begged Lord Beaufort

to

to go for her, and said she would stay till the woman came.

At that moment in came a decent farming-looking man. "O Jemmy, Jemmy!" exclaimed the poor woman, and again fainted away.

He flew to her; and, taking her in his arms, exclaimed, "My dear Peggy, what ails you? Oh! she is dead!"

"No, (cried Ethelinda,) she is not dead. She has been frightened into this situation by your long absence from her. She will, I trust, recover again presently; but do, my lord, (continued she,) go to the village for the apothecary. She requires more assistance, I fear, than the old woman can give her.— Beg him to make haste: I will stay till he arrives."

"Amiable Miss Claremont, (cried Lord Beaufort, as he went,) how happy am I to obey your benevolent commands!"

D 5

Ethelinda,

Ethelinda, by the same applications as had been successful before, again restored the woman, whose joy was excessive when she beheld her Jemmy safe and well ; but her spirits were greatly hurried, and she appeared very ill. Her husband accounted for his stay, but seemed in the greatest grief at her situation.

The apothecary soon arrived, as did the old woman, whom Lord Beaufort had likewise sent to act as a nurse.

Lord Beaufort told Ethelinda he would wait to conduct her home, but she begged of him not to do so. However, he sat down under a tree, within sight of the cottage, determined to wait for her.

In about a quarter of an hour, she came out, as the apothecary told her, he hoped, by keeping the poor woman perfectly quiet, the present alarming symptoms might soon go off, and she might do very well ; that
he

he would give her something to compose her, and return to see her again in a short time.

Lord Beaufort was sitting under the tree, reflecting upon the circumstances of the present event, which confirmed him in the good opinion he had of Ethelinda's disposition. He felt for her the most tender sentiments. Benevolent to the greatest degree himself, nothing was more likely to increase his attachment than being witness of an action in which benevolence was so conspicuous ; but a thousand reasons opposed his encouragement of the increasing passion he felt.

He was persuaded there was something between Mr. Corbet and her ; and, were not so, Lord Beaufort well knew the opposition his mother would give to such an alliance for him, and, though independent of point of fortune ; he always felt himself dependent upon her in every thing which

might materially affect her happiness; yet he could not rise so far above human nature as to be able always to resist its impulse—and under the tree he remained impatiently waiting for the arrival of Ethelinda.

When she saw him there, she started and blushed. He was sitting, or rather lying upon the ground, leaning upon his elbow with his head reclined upon his hand. He had taken off his hat, and his hair, neither in nor out of powder, fell carelessly about his face;—a face where expression and sensibility were most strongly marked,—as strongly as in our heroine's.

If our heroine had, till this moment, been insensible of Lord Beaufort's superior attractions, this moment was the last of her indifference. The part he took, the sympathy he shewed in the sufferings of the poor cottager, went to the heart of Ethelinda and engraved upon it his benevolence and goodness in very strong characters. Her imagination created

creased esteem was the consequence, and his person, his manners, his whole appearance, were calculated to inspire a far more tender passion.

There were few women, who were acquainted with him, saw him with indifference, though probably captivated chiefly by those qualities which Ethelinda made secondary ones, but, without which, it must be confessed her heart might not have felt all it was destined in a short time to feel on his account.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A still shorter Chapter, though exhibiting common Frailty, uncommon Resolution,—a Struggle,—and a Victory.

LORD BEAUFORT's disposition was too tender, too sympathetic, to have passed his life thus far in perfect indifference towards the sex.

While he was abroad, he had felt the power of beauty and sense united in the Marchioness de Sevigné. Lord Beaufort was particularly recommended to her and the marquis, and they did honour to the recommendation in every sense of the word.

word. Their château was his home, and he spent the chief part of his time with them.

The Marchioness of Sevigné was formed to attract. She added to the most captivating person that lively manner which at times shone forth in the sallies of wit and gaiety, and at other times seemed only to add force to sensibility and good-nature.

The Marquis adored her, and she most sincerely returned his affection, though nature had cast him in a different mould. She could be serious, but he was far more inclined to be so; yet he was pleased with her lively sallies, and paid her that kind of attention not only likely, but indeed necessary, to retain such a heart as her's. He had not, however, a grain of jealousy in his disposition. He knew she must be admired, and with pleasure saw the admiration she excited.

Lord Beaufort had never yet seen a woman altogether so perfectly formed to captivate;

captivate ; and his admiration, not insensibly, but irresistibly, became changed into *love*.

At first, he indulged himself to the extent of what he thought his wishes,—that of almost living at the Château de Sevigné, or in whatever party the Marchioness was engaged. But the poison in his bosom soon began to operate more strongly. He had every reason to believe that he possessed her friendship, but he wished to be sure he had a considerable share of her esteem. Indeed, he secretly wished, though ashamed to acknowledge it to himself, that she knew how much he loved her.

He respected the Marquis, but begun to feel uneasy in his presence. In short, he was near losing sight of honour, gratitude, and principle, but those virtues had been so early and so strongly ingrafted on his mind, by the best of mothers, that they could not easily be obliterated.

He

He reflected with horror on the precipice he was upon ; and, however, thorny and rugged the way back again, he resolved to retreat.

Having formed this resolution, and fearful of breaking it, he ordered his servants to prepare for leaving Italy the next day, and on that evening went to the Château de Sevigné, and surprised the Marquis and Marchioness, by telling them that letters from England required his immediate return.

After expressing the grateful sense he had of their kindness, which he declared no time would ever erase from his remembrance, he told them he should set off early next morning.

They both expressed the deepest concern at parting with him, and urged him to return to them again, when the business of his letters was completed.

When

When the moment of separation came, he felt as if deprived of every happiness ;— but he tore himself away, and a few days after wrote the Marquis a letter, in which he openly and frankly confessed to him the true reason of his so suddenly leaving Italy.

The Marquis justly thought it was a most honourable proof of fortitude and virtue, and Lord Beaufort himself ever after enjoyed that solid satisfaction which must always accompany the reflection of having sacrificed passion to principle.

He afterwards passed a year in other places on the continent, and returned to England by Spa, where he had met the Corbets.

CHAP. VI.

An Embarrassment, — a Surprise, — an Affront, — and a
Perplexity.

HE had never seen any woman, since the Marchioness, who had made the smallest impression upon him, until he saw Ethelinda ; and, though, at first sight, he was struck with her person, yet, beautiful as she was, her person alone would not have captivated him. But her mind, her uncommon understanding, her way of thinking, and way of acting, were altogether so insinuating, so attracting, that prudence, reason, and discretion, seemed almost vanquished.

He

He was lying under the tree, and making a woeful examination of his heart, when she came almost close to him, before he perceived her.

He started up. "Miss Claremont! (cried he,) Miss Claremont, I—I took the liberty of waiting for you."

"I am sorry, my lord, (returned Ethelinda,) that you have had the trouble of waiting so long; but I am sure you will be glad to hear that the apothecary thinks the poor woman will do well."

"Indeed I am, (answered Lord Beaufort) and glad should I be to see ladies often interest themselves upon such occasions; but you, amiable Miss Claremont, rise superior to your sex in every thing."

Our poor heroine's heart had never before felt the sort of sensation that it did now, and she knew not what it meant.

"I hope (answered she, colouring) that I have done nothing more than any other person."

erson in such a case would and ought to
ve done."

"We will not discuss that, (replied Lord
Beaufort.) I do not wish to turn satirist ;
at this I know, that you always both say
and do what is best to be said or done."

"No flattery, my lord, I beg, (replied
Ethelinda.) It is bad for me : I am not now
led to it. There was a time——;" and
the recollection of it caused an emotion that
made her falter, and softened the sentence
to nothing, while the tears glistened in her
eyes.

Lord Beaufort saw it, and, catching hold
of her hand, said, "There was a time when
you were happier, is it not so?—Tell me,
dear Miss Claremont, is there a possi-
bility of my being serviceable to you? You
do not know,—you cannot know, the joy it
could give me ; for it is in vain that I—."

Just as he uttered these words, Mr. Cor-
bett turned upon them out of a lane close

Ethelinda

Ethelinda was drawing away her hand but her confusion was excessive.—So indeed was Lord Beaufort's,—and so was Mr. Corbet's.

Jealousy seized his soul. After a moment's pause, he said, “I did not expect to meet you here, Miss Claremont, — and I am engaged. I beg pardon;—I am sorry I interrupted you.”

“You have no need to beg pardon, first for what you call an interruption. It was entirely accidental that either Lord Beaufort or I am here.”

“I wish it had not been accidental, (said his lordship;) but I cannot lay claim to the honour that I have no right to.”

They walked on, each feeling a good deal embarrassed. Ethelinda retired to her room with different sentiments than when she left it; or, at least, they were drawn from the secret recesses of her heart, where till now they had been hid even from herself.

What

What was she to think of Lord Beaufort's behaviour, and what was she to think of her own feelings? The situation Mr. Corbet found her in would justify suspicions, and put her in some degree in his power,—in his power, whom she hated more than ever. If Lady Cecilia knew of it, it would confirm her unjust ideas. In short, her situation was vexatious and extremely painful.

Miss Lyttleton just then came in. "My dear Miss Claremont, (cried she,) where have you been? and pray what have you done with Lord Beaufort?—Here is the poor man come, the miniature-painter, whom Miss Corbet says it is such charity to employ; and he has begun Miss Corbet's picture, and is to paint Lady Cecilia's, and they say Lord Beaufort's; and I must have mine drawn. Will you not have your's?"

"O no! (answered Ethelinda,) there will be enough of them without mine."

"Oh!

“ Oh ! but I am sure (answered Miss Lyttleton) there is none half so well worth doing as your’s.”

“ That is a mere compliment, and what you cannot and do not think, (answered Ethelinda ;) but, at any rate, I beg to be excused.”

“ A mere compliment ! (returned Miss Lyttleton ;) that it is not. Why, who here is half so handsome as yourself. Myself out of the question, you would not try to make me believe you think Miss Corbet is, or Mr. Corbet. Lord Beaufort, indeed, is well enough.”

“ Well enough ! (cried Ethelinda ;) do you only think him well enough ?”

“ Why, do you think him very handsome ?” said Miss Lyttleton, carelessly.

“ Yes, indeed I do, (answered Ethelinda.) Is he not generally thought so ?”

“ Why, yes, (cried Miss Lyttleton, laughing heartily,) I do believe he is ; and particularly so in this house, I fancy. — But never mind his beauty ; I want your picture,

picture, and I am fully determined to have it."

"You do me a great deal of honour, (answered Ethelinda,) in wishing for my resemblance;—but you must excuse me. I cannot, indeed I cannot fit for it. I have many reasons against it."

"Nonsense! (cried Miss Lyttleton;) I am sure you have not one good one."

"Indeed I have several good ones, (replied Ethelinda;) and must be excused."

"I will be revenged of you (said Miss Lyttleton,) I declare, if you will not oblige me."

"I must take my chance for that," answered Ethelinda.

Miss Lyttleton was then called away, to the great relief of our heroine, who, indeed, had then but just time to prepare for dinner, at which she would rather not have appeared; but thought her absence would give additional strength to any suspicions Mr. Corbet might have

formed, and appear to Lord Beaufort as if her spirits were too much agitated by the conversation she had with him. She determined, therefore, however painful, it might be to her, to appear at the dinner-table, where the time passed very unpleasantly.

Miss Corbet was extremely out of humour. She had heard of the tête-à-tête in the morning, which was quite sufficient to raise her jealousy to a pretty high pitch. Lady Cecilia was thoroughly chagrined at Ethelinda's persevering to refuse Mr. Jennings. She began to fear too, from some observations that she had made, Lord Beaufort's partiality to Ethelinda; but she thought it was only a growing partiality, and determined upon getting rid of her one way or another very soon.

Mr. Corbet was inwardly in a fever. He had never observed any very decided preference in Lord Beaufort towards Ethelinda, though he had for some time begun to suspect him of liking her better than he wished

to do. But the accidental meeting of the morning opened a great deal to his view. He had overheard enough of their conversation, to be convinced by it, that Lord Beaufort loved Ethelinda, tho' he had never before given her any intimation of it.

Of her sentiments he remained entirely ignorant, and flattered himself, as he had discovered it, that she had no particular regard for Lord Beaufort, and he could not conceive it possible that he would think of marrying her. He perfectly well knew the general sentiments upon these subjects, and his situation. He knew also that the Duke, whose title Lord Beaufort was to inherit, and from whom he must have considerable expectations, would warmly oppose such an alliance ; and what was a still greater reason, he knew that the Dowager-lady Beaufort would never give her consent to her marrying a woman so much his inferior. He knew likewise that Lord Beaufort, with all his superior qualities, had a

great share of family-pride, and would struggle hard against a passion that had so many and such reasonable opponents. She was as fair game, therefore, for him as for Lord Beaufort, and he resolved not to stop at any thing, but to gratify his passion at all events.

Ethelinda was poor and friendless; and if he could once get her into his power, he doubted not but he should be able to keep her so; and he determined to take the first opportunity of effecting his designs. Then, with his newly-imbibed jealousy, engrossing his thoughts, and made him gloomy, though he endeavoured to be otherwise.

Lord Beaufort felt his passion for this lovely heroine, together with his admiration of her, increase every hour. He could not but regret the interruption which had prevented him from coming to some *éclaircissement* relative to her situation. There was a constraint, something, between Mr. Corbet and her, evident to his observation, and what he had hoped to develop. Mr. Corbet's displeasure

displeasure, upon his meeting them, was very apparent. From what should that displeasure arise? Was it on his sister's account? Nothing had ever passed to give Miss Corbet, or her family, the slightest reason to suppose he meant any particular attentions to her. It was impossible for him not to see that the young lady wished to attach him, and took evident pains to do so. But Mr. Corbet's manner was more expressive of what related to his own immediate feelings, where self was concerned, than from the possible disappointment of his sister's hopes.

Lord Beaufort determined to take the first opportunity he could obtain of having a private conversation with Ethelinda; yet that was to be the result he knew not. He loved her, he found, more and more every day;—loved her, he feared, to an excess; but he hoped, and verily believed, not so far as to make him forego every other consideration. He had loved before,—he had conquered his passion,—and why might he

not conquer it again ? But he saw she was unhappy,—that her situation was dependent was cruel,—was, he found, very different to what she had been accustomed.

If, as indeed he imagined, she had no connexion with Mr. Corbet, he determined to render her every service in his power. He would recommend her to his mother, who possessed many virtues, though they were clouded sometimes by a degree of haughtiness and a reserve, in which she had been educated. Yet she would, he thought, patronize so deserving, and seemingly so unfortunate, a young creature. In short, he resolved to be a great philosopher, to endeavour to serve her merely from the principle of humanity. — But we will not anticipate so far as to say how well founded his resolutions were.

Miss Lyttleton and Sir James were the only persons unembarrassed. The latter dull, the former as lively, as usual. Sir James rallied every one by turns, and took the

berty of saying and doing every thing she pleased.

Lady Cecilia's anxiety to get such a large fortune into her family procured Miss Lyttleton the most invariable attention, having very little doubt but that, by the time she was of age, Mr. Corbet would secure her to himself. Every thing she did was right, and her flippancies not only were allowed by Lady Cecilia, but very often admired by her.

Miss Corbet followed her mother's plan, knowing her intentions, as often as she could; that is, as often as her own irascible temper would let her; but, as she did not take quite the same interest in what concerned Mr. Corbet as his mother did, she was not on every occasion so passive, and would sometimes, in spite of every consideration, fly out.

Miss Lyttleton, as has before been observed, saw through all the designs of the family, relative to her. In

not conquer it again? But he saw she was unhappy,—that her situation was dependent was cruel,—was, he found, very different to what she had been accustomed.

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berty of saying and doing every thing she pleased.

Lady Cecilia's anxiety to get such a large fortune into her family procured Miss Lyttleton the most invariable attention, having very little doubt but that, by the time she was of age, Mr. Corbet would secure her to himself. Every thing she did was right, and her flippancies not only were allowed by Lady Cecilia, but very often admired by her.

Miss Corbet followed her mother's plan, knowing her intentions, as often as she could; that is, as often as her own irascible temper would let her; but, as she did not take quite the same interest in what concerned Mr. Corbet as his mother did, she was not on every occasion so passive, and would sometimes, in spite of every consideration, fly out.

Miss Lyttleton, as has before been observed, saw through all the designs of the family, relative to her. In

hated some of them, and laughed at and despised them all. She had no views to answer, —determined to quit them as soon as of age, and did not care on what terms she kept with any of them. She liked Ethelinda, — she pitied her too, and would have done a great deal to serve her, but could not help plaguing her, when she could amuse herself by it.

It was the custom, *en famille*, to make tea in the room. Sometimes, if there was no company, the ladies worked, and the gentlemen read ; for about two hours before supper they generally had music. This evening, when tea was over, they were all sitting round the table, pretty much engrossed by their own thoughts, when, on a sudden, Miss Lyttleton exclaimed, “For mercy’s sake, do get a book, Lord Beaufort, or I shall go to sleep ; or do let Mr. Barnes, the painter, come in, and draw the whole group. Lady Cecilia, it will be a most interesting picture, and fit for the exhibition ; and by that means we shall get
Miss

Miss Claremont's, which she has the ill-nature otherwise to refuse. I have been begging for it very hard this morning. Perhaps you have been doing the same, my lord; but, if you have not, pray do now try your influence."

"If you cannot succeed, my lively cousin, (replied Lord Beaufort, evidently embarrassed) it is not likely that I should."

"Oh! but you are vastly mistaken there, my good lord. You don't know, perhaps, how high you stand in Miss Claremont's good opinion."

"You have a mind, I see, to make me stand high in my own, by flattering me with such an idea."

"She told me the other day, (said Miss Lyttleton,) that you very much put her in mind of Sir Charles Grandison."

"That is a compliment I feel very undeserving of, (answered Lord Beaufort;) though I should zealously try to merit it, if I might be allowed to choose my Harriet Byron."

“That would be me, I suppose, (said Miss Lyttleton;) and, since you delicately pay me so pretty a compliment, I’ll tell you more.”

“For heaven’s sake! my dear Miss Lyttleton, (exclaimed Ethelinda, colouring,) let your lively fallies be kept within proper bounds.”

“Why, you have such a presaging heart, (returned Miss Lyttleton,) that it is as good as a domestic oracle; for I will tell Lord Beaufort what you said. I am sure there is no harm in putting people in good humour with themselves.—My lord, she declared to me this morning, when we were talking about pictures, that she thought you would make the handsomest portrait of any of the party.”

“Pray, Miss Lyttleton, (cried Ethelinda, colouring,) don’t suffer your lively imagination to misrepresent so dreadfully.—What I said was very different.”

“What, then, (cried Miss Corbet, with a sneer,) did you say that Lord Beaufort was frightful?”

“No

could, in this case,
therefore, Miss Claremont
excuse her; and, I am sure, I will
tification she has given me, in the
that I have had the honour of being made
the subject of your conversation."

"Well, then, if you are determined not
to believe what I say, (replied Miss Lyttle-
ton,) I will read the poem which you put
into your work-bag, Miss Claremont; so
give it me."

"It is not there, I assure you, (answered
Ethelinda.

"Oh! but it is;—I know it is;—I saw
you put it there, (replied Miss Lyttleton.)
Give me the bag, my lord."

"Indeed it is not there, (said Ethelinda,)
and you will only tumble some work that I
wish to take care of."

the work you
don't care of?"

Ethelinda could not help looking
confused, though perfectly innocent ; but
answered, "I fancy you can tell, better
than any body, how they came there, Miss
Lyttleton."

"Who, I? (replied Miss Lyttleton;)
no, indeed! I never steal gloves."

"But I dare say, (cried Miss Corbet,
with a sneer,) whoever put them there had
some very good reason for it."

The tears came into Ethelinda's eyes.

"However, (said Lord Beaufort,) the
gloves are mine ; and by whatever fair hand
(looking at Miss Lyttleton) they were put
there, they have received a value from the
situation,

sition, that makes it impossible for me
ever to part with them."

"Well, (cried Miss Corbet,) I should
have been sorry to have had them found in
my bag, though his lordship is pleased to
turn it off so gallantly."

Lady Cecilia gave an indignant and pe-
netrating smile. Miss Lyttleton observed
it, and exclaimed, "Why, now, you only
want a little frankness upon these occasions,
my dear Miss Claremont, to be all perfec-
tion. I wish to amend you in that par-
ticular, because I dislike to see the smallest
defect in so perfect a character. Miss Cor-
bet is of my opinion too ;—one cloud, you
know, is enough to eclipse the sun,—and
such defects, in such a person, are what
envy darts her poison at."

"I am very conscious of my errors in
general, (replied Ethelinda ;) though I
cannot plead guilty upon the present occa-
sion."

"O my dear ! (returned Miss Lyttleton,)
you need not, in spite of the defects I
accuse

accuse you of, be too humble, for it be easy to turn such defects as your's into perfections,—like Julius Cæsar, who, being bald, you know, covered the deficiency with laurels.”

“ Miss Lyttleton (returned Miss Corbet) is so fond of metaphors, that she does not always attend to their correctness, for I don't very clearly see how there can be any resemblance between Julius Cæsar and Miss Claremont.”

“ I believe most people (replied Miss Lyttleton) will allow there is a great similitude in at least one particular, both being objects of envy.”

Ethelinda's breast was too full for her to enter further into the conversation. It had distressed her very much, and she took the first opportunity of retiring to her own apartment, and then gave free vent to her feelings. She could not help being angry with Miss Lyttleton; though she believed her free from malice, she accused her of cruelty. And yet Miss Lyttleton was not
much

much to blame. She knew not the circumstances that made such jokes and frolics particularly distressing to our heroine.

Ethelinda excused herself from going down to supper, but sat up late, revolving on the best step for her to take. She at last determined upon quitting Langley-Park, as soon as she received an answer from Mrs. Fletcher. She was likewise very anxious to hear again from Mr. Hall, and thought it could not be many days before she would receive a letter, as she had written to him, immediately upon the receipt of his, to ask advice.

She went to bed so occupied by these thoughts, that she scarcely closed her eyes, and arose the next morning with a severe head-ach. As the weather was fine, she determined to try if the air would not relieve her, and accordingly went into the garden, not apprehending she should so early be likely to meet with any one.

She

She strolled into a long shady walk, terminated by an open building, through which appeared a cascade.

She entered the Pavilion quite lost in thought, and was contemplating on the plan she had just formed in her mind, when she was suddenly roused by a deep sigh, and, looking round, saw, to her great surprise, Lord Beaufort lying, with his back towards her, extended upon a sofa. He held a picture in his hand. “Lovely creature! (exclaimed he,) why have I so artfully procured this picture? It is folly in the extreme, and is contrary to every resolution I have made, as it will feed a passion that I must conquer,—fan a fire that I must, let it cost what it will, extinguish. Ah! lovely, too lovely woman!” and then with rapture he kissed the picture.

Our heroine trembled so, that it was with difficulty she supported herself. She found he did not see her, and determined to retreat, which she did immediately, into
thi

thick grove, that secured her from observation.

The valet of Lord Beaufort had been an old servant of his father's, and he would, in spite of the checks he received from his lordship, favour him occasionally with some anecdote of the family they were with.

Mr. Corbet had determined to impress Lord Beaufort with the belief that he, Mr. Corbet, was a favoured lover of Miss Claremont, and had told his own servant confidentially, to insinuate as much to Dermont, Lord Beaufort's valet de chambre. Dermont had, the night before, thrown out this intelligence to his lord, which confirmed him in the resolution of subduing his attachment to Ethelinda.

Our heroine did not, in the thickest part of the grove, lose sight of Lord Beaufort and the picture. Her imagination represented the scene very faithfully, but whose picture it was she could not to a certainty know,

know, though something whispered to her that it was her own. "And suppose it is mine, (said she to herself,) what then? — His words shewed that he meant to conquer an ill-placed regard. — Ill placed, indeed, upon a poor destitute creature, almost without a friend! Oh! what a fatal loss was that letter! which might have made me equal to—— O presumption! no, never equal to him. — But it might have blessed me with parents,—with dear friends, who would have sheltered me, and given me a happy home; but now my lot is a sad reverse indeed! I must submit to mortifications and insults, and be a poor outcast."

Her feelings became so poignant, that she burst into tears. There was a green bank close by, which she sat herself down upon. She was wiping her eyes, when a rustling among the trees made her turn her head, and Mr Corbet stood before her.

She was rising as quick as possible, when he seized her by the arm, and threw him

self down by her “Sweetest creature ! (cried he,) what is the cause of those tears ?”

“Nothing !” cried Ethelinda.

“Nothing ! (returned he, still holding her ;)—do you usually cry for nothing ?—But it is the treatment you receive from my mother and sister that affects you, and no wonder. Put yourself under my protection, my adorable Miss Claremont, and you shall be safe from every insult.”

“I beg, sir, (cried Ethelinda, struggling to rise,) you will let me go. I complain of no insults but your’s, in keeping me thus.”

“You would not complain, perhaps, (returned Mr. Corbet,) if it were Beaufort instead of me.”

“I am sure Lord Beaufort would not act so, (cried Ethelinda.) — Pray, sir, let me go.”

“No ! (cried Mr. Corbet.) By heaven you shall not stir !—I will get the better of that cutting indifference of your’s. You shall love me, — you shall at any rate be mine. I can no longer conquer my passion ;
it

it consumes me !” and then, holding both her hands, he very rudely kissed her.

Anger gave her strength, and she contrived to spring up, and almost got from him, but he caught hold of her gown, and again put his arm round her waist, when Lord Beaufort appeared in sight. He was coming forward, but, upon seeing them, stopped short, and was just going to retire, when Ethelinda called to him. She appeared extremely agitated, and could but just speak, and entreated him to conduct her to the house.

Mr. Corbet stood unable either to speak or stir. Lord Beaufort seemed but little less confused than either of them. Ethelinda had not courage to account for what must appear so strange. She feared Lord Beaufort’s sudden resentment ; and yet she could not bear he should find her in such a situation, without endeavouring to account to him for it.

“ Your

"Your lordship (said Mr. Corbet, endeavouring to collect himself as they went on) walks very early."

"Not more early it appears than you do, sir," returned Lord Beaufort.

"Miss Claremont (cried Mr. Corbet, assuming an easy air) sets us a good example."

"It will be the last time (cried Ethelinda) that I shall ever walk here."

Just as she spoke, Lady Cecilia came up to them. "Bless me! (cried she,) Miss Claremont with Lord Beaufort and James! Where can you have led the gentlemen so early?" but, not waiting for an answer, "Mr. Corbet, (continued she,) I wish to speak a word or two with you;" upon which they went into another walk, and left our heroine and Lord Beaufort alone.

Each of them at first felt too much to speak; but, at last, Lord Beaufort hesitatingly said, "Indeed, Miss Claremont, I am very sorry,—I am unfortunate in
having

having——,” and he could bring out no more.

“ It is I who am unfortunate, (cried Ethelinda,) and indeed I am most cruelly so.—I am shocked at the situation you found me in ; but my situation is in every respect a cruel one. I beg pardon for troubling your lordship, but I wish to acquit myself of appearances that are so much against me.”

Lord Beaufort knew not what to think. The situation he had found her in with Mr. Corbet did indeed confirm the account he had heard ; yet he wished to hear what she would say. He trembled,—he could hardly breathe.——

“ I am sure (cried he) I have no right—I— but I own— I wish— I should be happy if—— but Mr. Corbet——.” He could not proceed.

“ That I am almost friendless, deserted, and wretched, (cried Ethelinda,) is too true, but still I have the comfort of feeling——.”

Just

Just then Lady Cecilia turned out of the
ood upon them. She perceived their mu-
al embarrassment. "When you have
ished entertaining Lord Beaufort, (cried
ady Cecilia,) you will please to come in,
d let him have some breakfast."

"I have not (said Lord Beaufort, reco-
ing himself) had the pleasure of Miss
aremont's company for two minutes, and
should willingly resign my breakfast, if
e would condescend to honour me with
onger."

"It is vastly well, (returned Lady Ceci-
) and I dare say she would have no ob-
tion to honour you much further; but,
present, I have occasion for her in the
ise."

Ethelinda's spirits were quite overcome.
felt very ill, was unable to say a word,
trembling, followed her ladyship into
house.

at breakfast, Lady Cecilia said that Sir
cis and Lady Ann Murray were come
into

into the country, and had sent to desire her to go to them the next day. Lord Beaufort said he was very glad to hear it, as he particularly wished to see Sir Francis, having some business with him.

“ Well, then, (answered Lady Cecilia,) Miss Lyttleton, Miss Corbet, your lordship, and I, will go in our coach, and Sir James and Mr. Corbet will either ride or go in the chaise.”

“ But how (cried Miss Lyttleton) is Miss Claremont to go ?”

“ Miss Claremont (replied Lady Cecilia) is no ways acquainted with Lady Ann, and it is not necessary she should go.”

I should be very sorry to go, (returned Ethelinda,) and shall prefer staying at home.”

Nothing more passed upon the subject, and Lady Cecilia employed Ethelinda entirely the whole morning, that it was impossible for her to find an opportunity of speaking

speaking again to Lord Beaufort, which she much wished to do.

She was most exceedingly unhappy, and resolved to leave Langley-Park as soon as ever she received a letter from Mrs. Fletcher, who, she thought, by this time must be returned home. She determined never, while she remained there, to venture alone into any private place, as she now began to be convinced that Mr. Corbet entertained the blackest designs against her; and resolved likewise to keep from him her intentions of leaving Langley-Park, and not to tell Lady Cecilia of it till the day before she went. She hoped that, when she was gone, he would think no more of her; but, lest she should be mistaken, resolved to act with the greatest circumspection.

Lady Cecilia was little more at ease than Ethelinda. She begun to fear Lord Beaufort's attachment to her. She was enraged at it, as was Miss Corbet, who hated our heroine with the most inveterate rancour.

Their fears of Lord Beaufort's attachment to her had confirmed Lady Cecilia in a resolution she had sometime entertained, of endeavouring to work up Mr. Jennings to run away with Ethelinda. She told him laughingly, that, if he had courage for such an enterprise, it must end in his success; for she was sure, when Miss Claremont had such a proof of his attachment, it would be very easy to reconcile her to him;—and that all women loved men who would run some risk, and be at some trouble, to obtain them.

She argued to herself, that, if once that step were taken, she should, at all events, be able to give such a turn to the affair, as would enable her to get rid of Ethelinda, which she determined at any rate to do. She had artfully persuaded Mr. Jennings into the scheme, but as there were no witnesses of it, she could, if occasion made it necessary, turn every thing she had said to him into a joke, and entirely disguise her own motives and conduct in the business.

She

She took care accidentally to inform him that the family were all going out for two days ; and laughingly added, that he never could have such another opportunity of securing Ethelinda. He received the information with great gratitude, and resolved to avail himself of it.

Our heroine was so engaged by Lady Cecilia, (who continually said the most bitter things to her,) that she did not see any of the family till dinner-time, when the next day's party was talked of. Mr. Corbet said, that, very unluckily, he was prevented from going with them, as he expected a person upon particular business, but would join them the day after.

This intelligence struck Ethelinda with dismay. She happened to cast her eyes towards Lord Beaufort, and saw him change countenance. The most horrid ideas rushed into her mind, and she could hardly sit at table.

She retired from it as soon as she was able, under a pretence of not being well. She considered attentively every circumstance, and could not help giving way to the most dreadful suspicions.

She was too well convinced that Mr. Corbet would stop at nothing to gratify his inclinations, though he would use the most consummate art to disguise his designs—therefore she had every thing to fear. She could not bear the idea of being left alone in the house with him. Her apartment, too, was solitary, and remote from any other that was inhabited. It was separated from the rest of the house by a very long passage, and was almost as retired in the day-time as in the night.

She was ruminating upon these circumstances, when she was roused by some one half-opening the door, and throwing a note into the room, which fell on the ground. She immediately picked it up
and

and read what will appear in the following chapter.

C H A P. VII.

In which there is Matter enough for an abler Pen to render much more entertaining.

Hond young Laddy,

I think it my dutty to tell you wat I nows,
that you may be on youre garde ; but
I overherd a vile plott betwene our young
master and his valet, how they were to get
into youre bed roome, threw the closet, bye
a ladder. I coude not bare to think so

F 3

goode

goode and kinde a laddye shud be wicked-
lie ufd without knowing it; and, if so be,
you wante to knowe more about it, I will
be in the passedge, withe a brume in my
hand presentlie, but hop you wil keep this
secrete, else I maw luse my place.

From, honnerd laddy,

Youre duttiful

FRIENDE.

Horror seized our poor heroine. Her
breath shortened, and she panted for respi-
ration. At last a flood of tears relieved her,
and she sobbed out, "What shall I do?—
what will become of me?"

She remained lost in thought some time.
She had no one to advise with, and, could
she bring herself to shew the note she had
received, no one who could help her would
believe it, except it was Lord Beaufort,
and

and a thousand reasons forbad her revealing it to him.

Miss Lyttleton had no power essentially to protect her. Her only resource was in flight, — in immediate flight. But where should she go? — what should she do? — alone and unprotected. Yet any thing was better than to stay there. The possibility of such an attempt, in her situation, justified, nay, made it necessary, for her to quit the house. It was not her intention to have staid many days, but it seemed important for her to get away immediately, and with the most profound secrecy — she resolved to see and speak with the person who seemed to be so kindly interested in her welfare.

The party to Sir Francis Murray's was to set out soon after breakfast the next morning, and, if she staid after them, she might not be able to get away. Her only time for escaping seemed that very night; yet a thousand apprehensions terrified her. —

“ And what (thought she) if this should

be an artifice of Mr. Corbet, to get me more easily and more effectually, than he might otherwise do, into his power. What shall I then do?" This reflection staggered her, and she stood with the door in her hand, half-opened, in the greatest perplexity.

A rustling in the passage roused her, and she opened the door further, and looked out. The under house-maid stood almost opposite the room, with the appointed signal of a broom in her hand.

Ethelinda, in a faltering voice, desired she would step in. When she shut the door, Ethelinda asked if it was not to her she was obliged for a note she had just received?

"Yes, (answered the girl,) I did do it, indeed. I meant well, and hope no offence; for I thought it a sad wicked thing, to a lady like you, in the house,—though, mayhap, he would not serve you as he did my poor kinswoman, whom he used so bad, as

to break her heart. I wonders that he is not afeard of going by the church-yard.— I should, if I was in his place, though he is so rich.”

Ethelinda had not time nor inclination to hear the particulars of the story Susan alluded to ; but, from the simplicity of her manner, she began to give credit to what she had told her, and begged to know where she had heard it.

“ Why madam, (replied Susan,) I was dusting the closet in the yellow room, which joins Mr. Corbet’s dressing-room, and I heard his valet, and a vile man he is, no better than his master—that he b’ant. I heard him say, I am certain you may easily force open the window ; upon which, I listened to hear what window they were talking about, when I heard all their vile plot ;— how Mr. Corbet was not to go with my lady, and at one o’clock the next night was to get into your chamber. I am sure I was all of a tremble, and thought to

F 5

myself,

myself, Well, what will this world come to, if such ladies ar'nt safe from such doings as these. However, I was resolved to be a spoke in their wheel, and so I thought I had better write, in case you should not take it well in me to speak ; and I am sure I would do any thing to serve you, but it is not for me to advise."

" I am very much obliged to you, (returned Ethelinda,) and accept of this," taking two guineas out of her purse, " as a reward for the favour you have done me ; and, if ever I have it in my power, I will do much more for you."

Poor Sufan was all gratitude ; but Ethelinda did not know enough of her to venture the making her a confidante ; and, having recovered herself a little, thought it would be better for her to appear at tea-time. The seeing Lord Beaufort once more was, perhaps, unknown to herself, the prevailing motive for her going down again.

She wished to clear herself in his opinion from the suspicions which she feared he

now

now entertained concerning her and Mr. Corbet. But she knew it would be impossible to find a moment when she could speak to him alone during that evening. She resolved therefore (if she went away,) upon writing a letter to Miss Lyttleton, acquainting her with the reasons that urged her to take the present step, and to beg that she would clear her conduct to Lord Beaufort, as she could not bear that any one should have reason for harbouring an unfavourable opinion of it.

Still our heroine was not quite determined upon going away in that clandestine manner. She hesitated.—A thousand apprehensions filled her mind. Yet, if she went openly, it must be known where and how she went; and, if Mr. Corbet had such vile intentions towards her, it was giving him the power of putting them into execution. Lord Beaufort,—if he really ever loved her,—if she were the object of his affections,—yet it was certain he meant to conquer them,—nor ought she, circumstanced as

she was, to wish otherwise, for it would be impossible for him to think seriously of her, without sacrificing the duty he owed to the best of mothers. She would, however, clear herself to Lord Beaufort by the means of Miss Lyttleton, who, she was certain, was sincere in her professions of friendship,—as far as friendship could have power over a disposition like her's.

She went down stairs with these unsettled resolutions. It happened to be a very fine evening. The stars shone bright ; and, as she passed by a passage that had an open wire window, which looked into a pheasantry, close to the house, she saw plainly Lady Cecilia and Mr. Jennings engaged in close conversation.

Seeing them in so retired a place, at such a time, drew her attention ; and, as she had every reason to be suspicious that she was the subject of their conversation, and that they might be forming some plan relative to her, she did what she never else would

would have done,—she endeavoured to overhear their conversation.

They spoke low ; but, as they were close under the little grated window, she could hear pretty well what they said.

“ You will never have such another opportunity, I tell you,” said Lady Cecilia.

“ My only fear, my lady, is, that when I have got her clear off, she will not then comply.”

“ Oh ! but she must, and she then will,—or what will become of her ; and she will afterwards be more obliged to you ; and would, I am sure, now accept you, only that Lord Beaufort turns her head with his flattery :—not that he means any thing by it,—and I am sure she will afterwards make a very good wife ; not that I wish to persuade you to any thing.—I only mean to oblige you, Mr. Jennings ; for, as I have taken Miss Claremont under my protection, and always mean to be her friend, I would not on any account have her marry
any

any man, who was not very desirous of the connexion."

"That, my lady, I should be highly proud of, and I will take your ladyship's advice."

"Oh! (returned her ladyship,) pray don't say it is my advice, I only just give you a slight hint. — But, if ever you were to mention it to any one, there must be an end to all intercourse between us, because people would say I had shewn more friendship to you than to her, though it is her good I am anxious to promote."

Mr. Jennings then assured Lady Cecilia how much obliged he was; "And (continued he) she shall be off in four and twenty hours."

"Well, (cried her ladyship,) you will do as you please, only mind ——" and then she spoke so low, that Ethelinda could not hear. — But she had heard enough. She trembled so, that she could scarcely stand; but, as soon as she was able, went back again to her own room. She could not recover herself

herself sufficiently to venture down stairs again, and she had a great deal to think about, and very little time for it.

This second horrid plot, that so happily came to her knowledge, made it absolutely necessary for her to get away as soon, and as secretly, as possible. She at last determined to have the resolution to quit the house that night. She considered, that, if she staid till next day, it might not be in her power to escape. But, let Mr. Corbet's designs be what they would, it was not likely he should think of putting them into execution till the family were gone; and, if Susan were false, and he meant to get her by stratagem into his power, she could more easily evade it immediately than afterwards; and the discovery she had just made convinced her that she had no time to lose. She thought it best at all events to deceive Susan. She rang her bell, which Susan answered. She told her that she was not very well, and desired that she would send word into the parlour, that she begged on
that

that account to be excused coming down again.

“ I shall (continued she) endeavour to compose myself to-night, and to-morrow I will consult upon what steps I ought to take in consequence of the information you, Susan, have been so good as to give me.

Susan said she should be very glad to do any thing to serve her, advised her not to fret herself, and went down stairs to obey her commands.

In about an hour after, Miss Lyttleton came up to her. “ Why, my dear Miss Claremont, what is the matter? You don’t look ill; yet (cried she, holding the candle close to her face,) you don’t look well neither.—What has happened?”

“ Nothing, (answered Ethelinda;) only I have a bad head-ache.”

“ Head-ache! (returned Miss Lyttleton;) I always think such head-aches as your’s seem very suspicious. They proceed more from——don’t they catch the contagion

tion, my dear, from some other part?"

"Sometimes, I believe, that is the case," replied Ethelinda.

"Well, now you are inclined to be honest, do tell me a little plainer. Has not something, or some one, vexed you?"

"I can tell you nothing, just now, (answered Ethelinda ;) perhaps to-morrow my confidence may be greater."

"To-morrow, you know, we go to Lady Ann's."

"Well, when you return from thence."

"Why—after saying so much, you will not surely keep me in suspense all that time?"

"Saying so much! (answered Ethelinda,) I don't know that I have said anything."

"Yes, you said that you could not tell me now, but would to-morrow."

"Indeed, (cried Ethelinda,) what I have to tell you will not be very pleasing, and for the present it must be deferred; but, as you seem to wish to be made acquainted with

with the cause of my anxiety, you certainly very soon shall be so."

"Well, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) I am very sorry you won't tell me to night, and to-morrow we go immediately after breakfast; though I fear, when I know what vexes you, I shall only have the wish, without the power, to help you. But I am sure there is one here who would, and could, help you. You are, I believe, at no loss to guess whom I mean."

"How should I possibly know whom you mean?" replied Ethelinda.

"How can you possibly *not* know whom I mean? (returned Miss Lyttleton,) it is so perfectly clear.—Why I never saw, nor never read of, any thing half so piteous. He has been sighing just now ready to break his heart, and was so absent, that he knew neither what he said nor did.—We have been cruelly dull, and Miss Corbet so cross, that I expected to be cuffed, for only saying, it was really to be lamented that every thing, and every body's humour, went wrong when you were not of the party, and

was impossible you could be with us every moment of the day."

"If you were a man instead of a woman, (replied Miss Corbet,) one might better account for that speech, and many other such."

"And if you were a man, (replied I,) it would not be so easy to account for that speech, and many other such." I thought she would have beat me, she coloured and looked so angry. So I snatched up a candle, and said I was going to see how you did. As they did not want better health, I could only wish them all better humour; so off I came, and I do not think I have offended myself; for you, though in a different way, seem as much out of sorts as they are, and I can't help partaking of your troubles, though I don't know yet what they are;—but I see you wish me to go, so good bye to you.—Shall I not say one kind word to the charming Earl, with all his wisdom, is, I see, but a sad philosopher. But I will not tease any longer; you wish to go to bed, and

and I hope to find you quite well when I return, though I shall most probably see you before we go, to-morrow." She then shook hands with Ethelinda, and ran down stairs again.

Our poor heroine's heart had been very troublesome during great part of Miss Lytleton's conversation. She never before had been so sensible of its attachment to Lord Beaufort. But a heart less formed for tenderness, and a mind less capable of distinguishing merit, than was our heroine might have easily yielded to the soft impressions, when assailed by such irresistible powers as he possessed.

She gave way to emotions that she had never before experienced, and at this trying moment, when she seemed almost cast upon the wide world, — without friend, — without shelter, and upon the brink of being exposed to the greatest danger and difficulties, she could not forbear exclaiming in an agony, "Oh! my dear unknown parent

parents, could you but see your poor child at this moment, — destitute of every earthly protector, what would you not feel for me? But, perhaps, you are now both happy spirits, and do know and see my distress. — Oh! that I were with you! Yet, why do I presume to murmur? — I will put my trust where it will be most effectual;” and then, breathing out a fervent prayer, she remained thoughtful for some minutes, and was soon much more composed.

She resolved to steal out of the house about three o’clock, and she meant to wait at the Park-Gate, which led into the high road, for some stage-coach, by which she could get a conveyance to York, and from thence to Sherborne.

She knew that Stanton, where Mrs. Fletcher lived, was not above three miles from it. She sat down immediately to write to Miss Lyttleton. She acquainted her with Mr. Corbet’s behaviour, and the necessity there was for her taking the step she
was

was about to do. She likewise told her the conversation she had overheard between Lady Cecilia and Mr. Jennings.

She wished to defend her own conduct and she considered it as proper to warn Miss Lyttleton of Lady Cecilia's arts, which might some time or other be directed towards her. She begged of Miss Lyttleton to set Lord Beaufort right, in regard to his sentiments of Mr. Corbet ; but desired she would not tell him more of the particulars of Mr. Corbet's behaviour towards her, than were necessary for her exculpation ; and she concluded her letter with expressions of gratitude for the friendship Miss Lyttleton had shewn her, and with an assurance of the happiness she should feel in hearing of her future welfare ; saying, that, in a few days, she would take the liberty of writing to her again, and hoped, afterwards, Miss Lyttleton would have the goodness to favour her with a few lines.

We are afraid that our heroine will rather be condemned for promising to put in the power of any one to discover her treat. But she knew Miss Lyttleton hated the Corbets, and would certainly not divulge what it must appear so much for the Linda's interest to be concealed. She had a secret wish to hear from that young lady, and she had no reason to doubt but that the letter would be given to Miss Lyttleton; for, as the two house-maids always did the work of the house together, she concluded they would find the letter together, and be a security to each other's honesty, if they had any temptation to dispose of it contrary to the direction. Indeed, it was most likely Miss Lyttleton would be the first person in her room, and find it herself. At any rate, she did not choose to tell Susan, because it might discover her intentions of going off that night, which she was unwilling to venture.

She could not, however, think of any other way of conveying the letter, and she had

had no mistrusts about it ; though she had at first resolved not even to tell Miss Lyttleton where she was going. She thought it would probably occur to the Corbets that she would go to Mrs. Fletcher, and therefore attempts at concealment were of less importance.

When she had finished the letter, and laid it in a conspicuous place, she went to her bureau, and packed up a little picture of Lady Falkner's. Her money, consisted of one hundred and forty pounds in notes, and about fifteen in gold and silver. She carefully disposed of the notes, and put the gold into a little box, except two guineas and some silver, which she put into her purse.

She now proceeded to make up a large bundle as she could conveniently carry, and she kissed her poor little dog, and grieved very much at leaving it behind, but did not dare to take him with her, as he might, by various ways, occasion her to be discovered.

discovered. She cried over her, and felt an extreme terror at the step she was compelled to take.

Every possible accident that might befall her came into her mind, which, though naturally uncommonly strong, was now a prey to terror and despair.

When the clock struck two, she went to the window. The moon shone with all its brightness, and played upon a river that ran at the bottom of a thick grove of ancient elms, which cast a deep and solemn shade on one side of a gradually-rising ground.—Not a breeze disturbed the air,—not a leaf trembled, excepting the asp; for all nature seemed hushed and perfectly tranquil.

She gently opened her window, to listen if she heard any thing stir, or could see any one; but, excepting the barking of a dog, at a distant farm-house, not a sound could she distinguish. She had dressed herself in

the plainest linen-gown she had, and put on a cloak and bonnet.

She withdrew from the window, and threw herself upon her knees, and in the most earnest manner implored that protection which she had so much need of. When she had finished that duty, she again went to the window, and stood lost in thought for some time. She was roused by the clock striking three, which she considered as the time destined for her to go. Her little dog looked up at her, with seeming wonder and solicitude. She again took it in her arms, kissed it, and burst into tears; but, put it down, and, taking up her bundle as gently as possible, opened the door.

Little Belle tried to follow her, but with an aching heart she pushed her into the room again; and, as the little creature was often used to be there for hours without her, she made no noise. Ethelinda then crept softly down stairs, round by some passages, where

she knew there was a door, which she could easily open, that led into the Park.

She managed very well, was soon out of the house, and took the round that led to the gate, where she meant to watch for a stage. She walked as quick as she could; but, happening to look on the ground, saw a little black shagreen case. She picked it up; and, upon opening it, was astonished by the sight of Lord Beaufort's picture.

A thousand different feelings agitated her. She stopped for a moment, considering what to do. She well knew what use she wished to make of it; but thought it a kind of robbery; yet, if she left it there, it might be found by somebody who had as little right to, and far less inclination for, it than she had. In short, whether she was justifiable or wrong in her casuistry, into her pocket it went,—and perhaps it possessed more efficacious power, towards raising her spirits, than all the art of chemistry could have produced.

The fineness of the morning, joined with the acquisition she had just got, and the safety of her escape hitherto, was beginning to compose her mind, and she was just arrived at the outside of the Park-gate, when she was alarmed by the trampling of horses, and immediately saw four rather shabby-looking men riding up to her. Her heart sunk, and she knew not whether to run back again, or stand still; but she had not much time for deliberation. The foremost of them rode immediately up to her.—“Why, sweetheart, (cried he,) where are you bound thus early?—Curse me, if you shall go without a companion.”

Our poor heroine, greatly terrified, had hardly the power of articulating; but, never without presence of mind, answered, that she had some friends very near.—

“Where the devil are they?” cried the man.

“Why,

“ Why, what is that to you ? (cried another of the party ;) can’t you mind your own business, and let the young woman alone ? ”

“ Why, I am about my business, (returned the other.) It is a damn’d shame such a handsome wench should go all alone ; and, if I have a mind to take care of her, what the devil’s that you ? ”

“ Yes, it is to me, (cried the other.) It is owing to your damn’d pranks that we have already got into a scrape ; and now we are likely to get out on’t, you will stay loitering here. I tell you, if you don’t come along directly, you may go and be hanged. Curse me, if you shall ever join us again,—and we shall have a good riddance too.—Come, Jack, come along, and leave the pretty lass to herself.”

“ But, damn you ! (cried the other, jumping off his horse,) I will have a kiss first, that’s what I will ; ” and he immediately seized our poor heroine, and gave her a hearty kiss, but not in quite so rude a style as might have been expected from the

coarseness of his manners. She was, however, frightened almost to death,—almost beyond the power of feeling joy, when he remounted his horse, and rode off with his companions swearing, as he went away, that he was damn'd sorry to leave her behind; and, if they had not been riding almost for life, would have taken her with them.

It is necessary to mention that these were a set of smugglers, who had come across the country, to avoid pursuit.

Our heroine's courage was now at a very low ebb. She started at the least noise, and was almost balancing in her mind whether she had not better return again, and take some other method of getting away, when she heard the sound of a carriage at a distance.

It proved to be the York stage. She called to the coachman, who immediately stopped; and, upon her being informed there

there was a place at her service, she soon seated herself in it.

As the passengers were uninteresting, and her journey was unattended with any particular event, we shall pass it slightly over; only saying, that, from York, she took a post-chaise to Sherborne, and from thence to Mrs. Fletcher's, whose farm-house was about three miles out of the road.

She arrived after it was dark. The post-boy knocked hard at the gate; and, as they were not used to late visitors, both Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher came to the door. At first they did not know her; but, in an instant after, Mrs. Fletcher exclaimed, "Is it possible!—My dear Miss Claremont, is it indeed you?—I rejoice to see you.—But how do you do, my dear young lady?"

Ethelinda embraced this worthy woman.

"You are surprised to see me so suddenly, without my having sent you a line."

“ I wrote to you yesterday, (said Mrs. Fletcher.) I only returned the day before. But, come in ; don’t stand here in the passage.

Ethelinda then desired Mr. Fletcher to discharge her post-chaise, and walked into a clean kitchen, with a brick-floor, where was an excellent fire, which Mrs. Fletcher went to make still better, saying she would make one in the parlour, but, as they were but just returned, she had not settled her things quite about her. Ethelinda begged she would consider her as one of the family, and assured her that she should be greatly hurt if she made the least alteration on her account.

Mrs. Fletcher said, that it was always her intention to have a bit of fire in her little parlour, though she had not this evening, and immediately ordered her maid to light one, and get the tea-things.

They were soon prepared, and a large toast round the loaf set upon the table, which

was

was a welcome sight to poor Ethelinda, who was almost famished, as she had been unwilling to stop by the way, and had only had a biscuit since she set out.

Mrs. Fletcher thought she could not make the fire large enough, and she piled upon it piece after piece. Neither could she make the tea too strong, or put too much thick cream into Ethelinda's cup. She had the toaster brought in, as Mr. Fletcher, she said, made the best toasts in the world. When they were all drawn round the table, close to the fire, Mrs. Fletcher begged Ethelinda to tell her every thing that had happened. She could not help repeating an hundred times how happy she was to see her, though she was sure something particular had brought her so suddenly.

Though Ethelinda felt real satisfaction at the sight of Mrs. Fletcher, whom she had always loved, yet it brought to her mind former scenes, and she was indebted to a copious flood of tears for tranquillity.

Upon reflection, she had many things to lower her spirits, but at this moment she felt in safety, and (excepting upon one account) comparatively happy to what she had done lately.

Her natural cheerfulness was by degrees drawn out ; and, when tea was over, she related very minutely to Mrs. Fletcher all that had happened to her since they parted, and did not,—could not entirely conceal the partiality she felt for Lord Beaufort.

Mrs. Fletcher listened attentively to every circumstance, which frequently drew from her tears and exclamations, and she could not help expressing very forcibly her grief, at what she called the hard fate of Ethelinda. She execrated Mr. Corbet, and had great apprehensions of his still pursuing his wicked designs.

Ethelinda had scarcely suffered herself to mention Lord Beaufort's evident partiality

to her. She had barely hinted at it. However, the hint was sufficient, as she had blushing acknowledged, that, of all the men she ever saw, he appeared to her the most amiable, and she could not help expatiating upon his good qualities. It was a subject that often employed her thoughts, and she was too open, too candid, and sincere, to disguise them, at the moment her innocent heart was dilated by the pleasure she felt in the unconstrained society of a person who had always shewn her the most tender affection and friendship; and, when she contrasted Mrs. Fletcher's kind attention with Lady Cecilia's cruelty, her heart swelled with gratitude to the one, and abhorrence of the other.

Mrs. Fletcher could scarcely keep her temper within bounds, when our heroine related the plan she had over-heard between Lady Cecilia and Mr. Jennings. "Vile, wicked woman, (exclaimed she,) why should she not be publicly exposed?"

“ If (cried Ethelinda) there were no other objection to it, there is the insuperable one of having no witness. She would no doubt deny the whole, and I should only stand accused of inventing a scandalous falsehood. My letter to Miss Lyttleton will, I hope, gain credit in her opinion, and she will justify me to Lord Beaufort, for I am anxious, I own I am, that my conduct should appear to him in its true light, though I have no other view in it—I can have no other—than to stand justified in his opinion.

“ But why should you have no other view in it? (cried Mrs. Fletcher,) if Lord Beaufort likes you, and you like him.”

“ Because (replied Ethelinda) it is impossible I should; but, esteeming him as a friend, as the most amiable and deserving of men, I cannot be indifferent to his opinion of me.—If I know my heart, it does not encourage an idea of his fate and mine ever being united. No, (continued she, sighing,) rank, fortune, and an elevated situation, must and ought to belong to the woman destined

destined for Lord Beaufort.—But I feel fatigued, my dear Mrs. Fletcher, and think it will be best for me to retire early.”

Mrs. Fletcher was quite of that opinion, and immediately conducted our poor heroine to her apartment, where the recollection of this too amiable Lord Beaufort, whom she had probably left for ever, oppressed her more than all the fatigue she had endured in travelling so many miles. At first, her spirits were raised by feeling herself safe, and the sight of Mrs. Fletcher ; but, when she was alone, and began to reflect upon her situation, she could not help feeling sufficient cause for dejection.

However, she possessed a degree of firmness sufficient to check unavailing despondency, and piety enough, when she gave herself time for reflection, to submit with humble resignation, even to a much worse fate than her's appeared to be.

There

There are but few situations in which the human mind cannot find resources and cause of consolation, if it exert itself as it ought to do, and is generally capable of doing; but there is a culpable inactivity, which is too often indulged in times of distress, and necessarily ends in producing a fatal and blameable despair.

The next day Ethelinda exerted herself as much as possible. She was amused with seeing Mrs. Fletcher's farm-yard. She attended to the making of the bread, the feeding of the poultry, and the threshers in the barn. She went to carry victuals to the shepherd, who was attending a large flock, which was scattered over a beautiful valley. On the side of a very high hill, at the bottom of which ran a winding stream, a cascade and a mill at work were in sight. It was a most charming autumn morning; many of the leaves were of that beautiful gold colour which immediately precedes their fall; and the sun, which shone bright upon them, gave a glow to their appearance

that

that almost creates a doubt if they are not more beautiful and picturesque than when they have received the first verdure of the spring. The shepherd was whistling, and a man on a loaded cart, which moved slowly along, was singing his rustic song.

All nature seemed to exert itself to protract the present scene, unwilling to exchange these, its tranquil beauties, for tempestuous winds, frozen snows, and the chilling deserted appearance, that were too soon to succeed them.

Our heroine spent her whole morning in walking about the farm, and following Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher in their various occupations.

They dined at two o'clock, which was an hour later than usual, in compliment to Ethelinda. She soon made that discovery, and insisted upon their not doing so again. After dinner, she helped to bring home the

COWS,—

cows,—saw them milked,—watched the returning teams and wearied plough-boys. — She saw some of the cattle and poultry housed,—and was shocked at the cries of a beautiful little calf that was dragging to the butcher's.

Ethelinda went close to it, and stroked it. The creature licked her hand. She inquired what was going to be done with it, and, when they said it was to be killed, she intreated to have it spared, with so much earnestness, that Mr. Fletcher said he would keep it, and bring it up.

Ethelinda was delighted with having saved its life, and returned into the house, telling Mrs. Fletcher, that she had already been trying her influence with Mr. Fletcher. “And, I believe, (continued she,) if you mean that the farm should ever turn to any account again, you must banish me from it, or you will shortly be over-run with its produce.”

Ethelinda

Ethelinda soon explained her meaning ; and Mrs. Fletcher, who was delighted with all she said and did, found cause in that, as in every other circumstance, to commend her.

So different was this treatment from what our poor heroine had lately been used to, that it inspired her with cheerfulness, in spite of the many unpleasant circumstances that attended her situation.

Several days passed in this manner, but Ethelinda had, from the first moment of her arrival, and, indeed, from the time she determined to leave Langley-Park, resolved to be no incumbrance upon any one. She felt more satisfaction in the idea of procuring her livelihood, than in being obliged to the bounty of such a woman as Lady Cecilia, or of one whom (though perfectly disposed to shew her friendship) it could not conveniently suit. She was, however, happy in the idea of knowing
 she

she could have an asylum with Mrs. Fletcher, whenever she was in a situation to require one.

Ethelinda had corresponded with Miss Elford, and continued very much pleased with that young lady, who was not, however, circumstanced so as to be able to offer her that protection which she would gladly have done.

Her uncle's health was very indifferent, and she was likely to go abroad with him. She had been upon a visit in a distant part of England, and Ethelinda had not heard of her for some time.

Near ten days elapsed without our heroine's receiving a line from Miss Lytleton, though she had written to her very shortly after she arrived at Mr. Fletcher's.

In her letter, she told her where she was, but begged to have the place of her residence

residence, if possible, kept a secret from every one, and desired Miss Lyttleton to write to her, under cover, to a friend of Mr. Fletcher, at Sherborne.

Ethelinda not receiving a letter, it will be proper to account for it, by leaving her, for the present, in her retired, and comparatively happy, situation, to take a view of the Corbet family, from the time of her elopement.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Productive of general Dissatisfaction.

THE house-maid (not Susan) happened to go very early into Ethelinda's room, having been sent to inquire for the key of a trunk. She was surprised at finding the window open; and, upon turning towards the bed, saw it exactly as she had left it. The little dog was lying by the bedside, but in vain she looked, and called for Miss Claremont.

The girl, quite alarmed, ran down stairs and, meeting with Duval, Mr. Corbett

let de chambre, exclaimed, "O Mr. Duval, I am frightened out of my wits! something very bad must have happened to poor Miss Claremont;—there must, indeed, for she is not in her room, and her bed has not been lain in all night, but is the very same I left it last night."

"Dat be very odd, indeed, (replied the valet.) But are you very sure dat Mademoiselle be not any where about?"

"Oh! I am sure she has not been to bed to night; and the window is wide open."

"O sacrebleu! dat be very extraordinary!" and away went the faithful Frenchman to give his master this wonderful intelligence.

Mr. Corbet was astonished. Being always an early riser, he was up, and dressed, and resolved to go to the room to convince himself (which he found at present difficult) of the truth of this strange story. Accordingly, to Miss Claremont's room, he went as fast as he could, and found the state

state of things just as they had been represented.

He was shocked and mortified to a great degree, and stood almost petrified. The little dog snarled at him, and at another time would have received a kick for its incivility; but Mr. Corbet was too much perplexed to regard such an animal. He looked round the room, and, casting his eye on the toilette, saw a letter, which he took up, and found it directed to Miss Lyttleton. He concluded no one had seen it; or if they had, it could not be known that he had taken it, as no one knew of his being there. He eagerly put it into his pocket and returned to his apartment.

The perusal of it did not afford him much satisfaction; but, though it did not inform him where she was, he found that he might soon obtain that information, by intercepting the next letter to Miss Lyttleton, which he determined to do, as well as every other

ther, in which he could guess Miss Claremont was concerned.

The house was soon alarmed with the news of our heroine's flight, for Jenny told to every servant, and Susan pretended to be as much surprised as any one,—and at first was so, but soon accounted for it to herself, and was a little chagrined at not being let into the secret,—a confidence she thought herself deserving of.

When Miss Lyttleton's maid went to her, she exclaimed, "Good la ! ma'am, the most shocking thing has happened !"

"What has happened ? (cried Miss Lyttleton ;) you frighten me to death."

"O ma'am ! Miss Claremont is eloped !" and then she told all the particulars.

"If that is all, I am very glad of it, (cried Miss Lyttleton,) she cannot be worse off than she was here,—and is most probably a great deal better ;—but she is not
gone

gone by herself. I suppose.—Is Lord Beaumont gone too?”

“Indeed, ma’am, I don’t know, (replied the maid;) but, as you say, poor Miss Claremont did not lead a very happy life here.”

“Happy! (cried Miss Lyttleton,) it was the life of a dog! and I am heartily glad she has had spirit enough to do as I hope she has done. But make haste,—give me more things. I want to hear more of the matter.”

When Lady Cecilia was told of it, she pretended not to wonder at any thing Miss Claremont did. In her heart she believed that Mr. Jennings had found means of taking her off; and, though she affected to be perfectly ignorant of the least guess where she was, said that she had long known what sort of girl she was, and therefore was not at all surprised at her elopement.—The family were soon all assembled.

Miss Corbet expressed her astonishment but was in her heart very uneasy on account

of Lord Beaufort, having a strong suspicion of his attachment to Ethelinda.

“But, pray, (said Miss Lyttleton,) who is supposed to have accompanied Miss Claremont? Where is Lord Beaufort?”

“Lord Beaufort? (answered Miss Corbet;) why, where should he be?—In his own apartment, I suppose.”

“I suppose not, (answered Miss Lyttleton.) I am sure if he is, I shall be very uneasy for Miss Claremont.”

Just then in came the Earl.

“Bless me! (exclaimed Miss Lyttleton,) I am quite astonished. Why, I had no doubt, my lord, but that you were gone with Miss Claremont.”

“Gone with Miss Claremont, madam! why, where is Miss Claremont gone, pray?”

“Oh! that nobody knows, unless you can tell us, my lord, which I heartily hoped

you could.—But have not you heard about it?"

"Indeed, I am quite at a loss to understand you, and wish you would be more explicit."

They then informed him of all that was known. His feelings so visibly affected his countenance, that, had not Mr. Corbet been in possession of certain intelligence, he would have had great reason to believe that Lord Beaufort was a principal party in the elopement. It however convinced him still his attachment to her.

After some reflection, he resolved confidentially to lead the Earl into a belief that he and Miss Claremont perfectly understood each other, and that he was instrumental to her flight. He well knew that Lord Beaufort was a man of too nice honour and punctilio to betray what was imparted to him in confidence, and he resolved it should not appear that he supposed it of any particular moment to Lord Beaufort.

Miss

Miss Lyttleton perceived the confusion of Lord Beaufort, as did the jealous love of Miss Corbet.

“Where she can be (cried Miss Lyttleton) is most wonderful, and I think ought to be enquired into immediately. Some accident may have happened to her.”

“What accident can have happened ? (cried Lady Cecilia.) She must have gone voluntarily, for there is no appearance of thieves having broken in, to take her away by violence.”

“She is the best treasure that any thief could have got out of this house, (cried Miss Lyttleton ;) and if I had not yet my doubts of some people still in it knowing more of her than they will at present own, (continued she, looking at Lord Beaufort,) I should be much more uneasy than I am.—I declare that I love Miss Claremont excessively.”

“So it seems, (replied Miss Corbet ;) and I have loved Miss Claremont, till

H 2

I thought

I thought there was reason to do otherwise."

"But your reason, perhaps, might not influence every one," returned Miss Lyttleton.

"Pray, (cried Lady Cecilia,) let us have done with this subject for the present. It is time we should be thinking of setting out."

"Why, does your ladyship intend going without making any inquiry after her?" said Miss Lyttleton.

"Certainly I do, (replied Lady Cecilia,) for what enquiry can I make? It would be in vain; and I don't doubt but we shall soon hear of her being very safe."

"I hope we shall, (replied Miss Lyttleton;) but I had rather not go to Lady Anne's."

Lady Cecilia said that could not be avoided, and insisted upon the party taking place.

Lord Beaufort had left the room, and he just then came in to inform Lady Cecilia that

that he had received letters which obliged him to leave Langley-Park ;—that he was sorry he could not accompany her to Lady Anne's, but had business that obliged him to go immediately to town.

This declaration operated upon the whole company like an electrical shock. Lady Cecilia, though perfectly convinced that Lord Beaufort had no hand in Ethelinda's elopement, was now as much assured of the interest she had in his heart. Miss Corbet, ignorant of what Lady Cecilia suspected, was ready to burst with jealousy and indignation.

Miss Lyttleton was now confirmed in her suspicion of a mutual attachment between Lord Beaufort and Ethelinda, and she believed a few days would unravel the affair, and that, in spite of every thing and every body, she would be introduced as Lady Beaufort.

Planet-struck as they were, no one uttered a syllable for some moments. At last, Lady Cecilia, colouring, said that she was extremely sorry, and she owned a little surprised, at the great suddenness of his lordship's determination. He made some further apology, and then took his leave.

In truth, he was quite incapacitated for the intended visit. His heart was all tumult, and his mind the seat of confusion. Upon the first intelligence of her absence, his heart misgave him. He had seen her in situations with Mr. Corbet that justified suspicion,—and she was gone. It was clear to him that Mr. Corbet loved her, and he seemed so much at his ease, that he little doubted of his being privy to her flight.

When he had quitted the breakfast-parlour, hardly knowing what he did, he went into the garden. Mr. Corbet perceived it, and followed him.

“ A

"A fine piece of work we have here this morning," said he, going up to Lord Beaufort.

"A fine piece of work, indeed! (returned Lord Beaufort.) But where, (continued he, hesitating,) can Miss Claremont be?"

"That (continued Mr. Corbet) will be known, or guessed at, perhaps, hereafter.— But I have a favour to beg of your lordship. It is, that you will prevent any ridiculous inquiry being made after Miss Claremont, in case my father or mother should take it into their heads to think it necessary. I have business, (continued he, with a smile of significance ;) you may guess what it is, that calls me another way. I cannot, therefore, attend the party to Lady Anne's.— But, whatever my private connections are, my father and mother need not have any apprehensions of my marrying so as to disgrace the family."

He might have gone on for ever, uninterrupted by Lord Beaufort, who seemed

petrified, and could not articulate a word. "I wish you, my lord, (continued Mr. Corbet,) a pleasant journey. I shall probably absent myself for some time, but, when I return, shall be extremely glad if I have the pleasure of seeing your lordship here." He was then taking his leave.

"Stay, sir, (cried Lord Beaufort :) I must beg an explanation of what you have been saying ; for, excuse me if I tell you that I do not understand it. Do you mean I should suppose ?—by heaven, it is impossible !——I cannot believe——"

"Suspend your belief, (returned Mr. Corbet ;) and, for explanations, time will unravel what may now appear rather mysterious."

Lady Cecilia came up at that instant, and desired to speak a few words to Mr. Corbet, who, with a careless air, wished Lord Beaufort a good journey, and walked away with Lady Cecilia, who felt and expressed a good deal of dissatisfaction at Lord Beaufort's

Beaufort's having so suddenly determined to quit the party.

Mr. Corbet was as little pleased at it, in his heart, as Lady Cecilia ; but they could neither of them prevent it.

Lady Cecilia, with Miss Lyttleton, Miss Corbet, and Sir James, set off for Lady Anne Murray's. Mr. Corbet got upon his horse, determining to get out of Lord Beaufort's way, as he had already said enough to answer his present purpose, and did not wish for a further scrutiny from Lord Beaufort ; of whose attachment to Ethelinda he now had not a doubt, though he still continued to think, judging from his own unworthy sentiments, that he would never have an idea of marrying her.

He was irresolute as to his own proceedings, but determined to wait for the promised letter to Miss Lyttleton, which, he knew, he could easily get into his possession, by contriving that his servant, instead

of any other, should go to the post-house every day; and, by taking care that the packet should be delivered to him, he could assort the letters as he pleased.

On some accounts he was glad of Lord Beaufort's absence, and he was sure that he could not pursue Ethelinda, as he could not possibly know where she was. Mr. Corbet determined, if she went to town, (which he should discover by the second letter,) to follow her, but to remain at Langley-Park till he saw what was likely to be her plan.

Lord Beaufort was a prey to the keenest and most bitter feelings. When he determined not to accompany Lady Cecilia, it was because he felt unable to appear in a tolerable state of tranquillity. In the uncertainty of what was become of a woman, whom, in spite of every effort to the contrary, he ardently loved, he had hardly resolved where to go, or what to do. But, in the conversation he had with Mr. Corbet,

he

He received an additional and unexpected shock. He could not in reason doubt of there being an understanding between Ethelinda and Mr. Corbet, and yet his mind refused (in spite of all that had passed) a full assent to it. He was perplexed,—he was wretched,—and the sight of Mr. Corbet was painful to him.

He determined to go to Sir Henry Faulconberg's, and ordered his servants to get ready as soon as they possibly could; and, in two hours after, he left Langley-Park,—but with feelings of a very different nature from what he brought with him.

His admiration of Ethelinda's mind had increased his attachment to her, far more than her beauty had done, though that was of the most captivating kind, and had its due weight upon him, as he was not one of those frigid stoics who are perfectly insensible to its attractions.

The more he reflected upon her superior qualities, the less he believed her capable of consenting to the connection Mr. Corbet had hinted at. He had the greatest inclination to find out Ethelinda. He knew Mr. Corbet's libertine principles, and thought it possible he might be attempting to deceive her. He considered it as his duty to guard her against it, and hoped he could procure her the protection of his mother; or, at least, that she would interest herself so far, in the cause of injured innocence and beauty, as to procure her an asylum; particularly if he acted as disinterestedly as he fancied he could do;—but then the suspicious situations he had seen her in with Mr. Corbet rushed into his mind, and left him again a prey to uncertainty and wretchedness.

Ruminating on these matters, he bent his course towards Sir Henry Fauconberg's, which there is reason to believe he would not have done, had he known where Ethelinda was to have been found.

Lady

Lady Cecilia staid only two days at Lady Anne Murray's. Her head was too full of plotting, and her heart too full of mischief, to suffer her to remain quiet for any length of time in one place.

She had no doubts of finding every thing as she expected, relative to Ethelinda, and little thought what a disappointment awaited her.

About an hour after her return, Mr. Jennings was announced. Lady Cecilia was alone in her dressing-room.

"Well, Mr. Jennings, how do you do? You bring us news of our runaway, I suppose."

Mr. Jennings, who had heard of the elopement a very few hours after it was found out, and whose surprise was very great, was now still more astonished. He felt as much hurt as he was capable of feeling, and more anger than he dared to shew, but exclaimed, "Who, I?—I, my lady?
—not

—not I, indeed!—I know nothing of her.”

“ You know nothing of her ? (reiterated Lady Cecilia.) Do you mean to impose upon me ? — or, pray, what do you mean ? ”

“ Why, my lady, I mean that I have not seen Miss Claremont ; and heard, an hour after your ladyship went away on Thursday, that she was missing.”

“ Missing !— yes ; but I concluded you would know where she is.—And are you in earnest that you do not ? ”

“ Upon my soul, I am. I know no more about her than the child unborn.”

“ You astonish and alarm me excessively, Mr. Jennings ;—but you will, of course, take no notice of our conversation. I had no doubt of your mutual attachment ; and expected, I own, to have found that she was safe with you. As it is, I know not what to say, nor what to think.”

Indeed her mind was just then a perfect chaos. She told Mr. Jennings that she was
fo

so much agitated, by what he had said, and so unable to account for what had happened, that, at present, she wished to be alone.

Mr. Jennings said he would only mention one circumstance, which was, that the groom had told him, he believed Miss Claremont was gone with Lord Beaufort.

This information did not tend to quiet the spirits of Lady Cecilia, who said, that she could not give credit to that idea, but was at present so much confused, that she could not form any opinion; and again wished Mr. Jennings good night, having first found out that he had no good reason for what he had suggested relative to her being gone with Lord Beaufort. Lady Cecilia, however, the more she reflected, the more uneasy she grew, and many trifling circumstances occurred to strengthen her fears of Lord Beaufort's attachment to Ethelinda.

Miss Lyttleton had, in her lively manner, made many observations, which had
that

that tendency ; and she resolved instantly to have some conversation with her upon the subject ; but, as she had hitherto taken up the event so calmly, she could not then, without assigning some reason for it, appear very much alarmed.

She went in search of Miss Lyttleton, and found her in the music-room with Miss Corbet.

“ My dear Miss Lyttleton, (exclaimed Lady Cecilia,) I am extremely uneasy about Miss Claremont.”

“ About Miss Claremont, madam ? (returned Miss Lyttleton.) Why, have you received any new information, that creates this sudden uneasiness ?”

“ Why, my dear, to own the truth, I had some reason to believe that I could guess with whom she had eloped ; and, if she chose it, as she was her own mistress, I had no right to prevent it ;—but I find I am mistaken ; she is not gone with the person I suspected.”

“ And

“ And pray, ma’am, (answered Miss Lyttleton,) who is the person your ladyship suspected ?”

“ Why, perhaps, you may be surprised, but I own to you it was Mr. Jennings.”

“ Surprised, indeed, ma’am, (replied Miss Lyttleton.) Such an event would have been a surprise indeed !—Miss Claremont elope with Mr. Jennings !”

“ Why, (replied Lady Cecilia,) she might imagine Sir James or I might have made objection, and then——.”

Miss Lyttleton (who knew much more than Lady Cecilia imagined, and felt the highest indignation at the duplicity of her conduct,) interrupting her, said, “ With regard to objections, madam, she had no reason to suppose your ladyship would make very strong ones ; though it was, I should suppose, next to impossible she could ever think of such a vulgar fellow in any other light than as a good whipper-in to a pack of hounds.”

“ Your

“ Your ideas of Mr. Jennings, my dear Miss Lyttleton, (replied Lady Cecilia,) are I think rather severe. But you must consider that Miss Claremont’s situation—.”

“ Her situation, indeed, (interrupted Miss Lyttleton,) was deplorable enough; but I heartily hope that, in future, it will be such as she deserves.”

“ Pray, then, Miss Lyttleton, do you know what her situation is likely to be ?”

“ I hope I do, ma’am, (returned Miss Lyttleton.) I hope very soon to congratulate her as Lady Beaufort.”

“ Surely, Miss Lyttleton, you can have no reason for such an idea ?”

“ I think (replied Miss Lyttleton) there is every reason for it ; but it may not happen for all that.”

“ Happen ! why, is it possible you can think Lord Beaufort would seriously entertain a thought of marrying Miss Claremont ?”

“ He cannot (returned Miss Lyttleton) entertain a thought of any other connexion

with

with Miss Claremont ; and I believe he has very few thoughts in which she has not a considerable share. I think I never saw any man so much attached ; and no wonder,—excellence will attract excellence ; and I have no doubt of their being uncommonly happy.”

“ Why, surely, Miss Lyttleton, (cried Lady Cecilia, out of all patience,) you know more of this affair than you have acknowledged. Well, do be kind enough to be explicit. Have you reason to believe they are gone off together ?”

“ Yes,—certainly. I concluded it must have been your ladyship’s opinion, and that it prevented you from being so uneasy, as you doubtless otherwise would have been.”

“ Indeed, my dear Miss Lyttleton, (answered Lady Cecilia, hardly able to contain her vexation,) you mistake the matter. You don’t know Miss Claremont so well as I do ; you are not aware of her arts. The preciousness of her appearance has imposed upon

upon you, but it has not upon me :—and my poor sister Lady Falkner's eyes were opened before she died. It was plain, how much lowered Miss Claremont was in her opinion."

" I am sure (returned Miss Lyttleton) that if Miss Claremont was lowered in Lady Falkner's opinion, the good old lady had either lost her senses, or some other people their honesty, who must have had art and power enough to misrepresent Miss Claremont, who, I would pledge my life upon it is one of the most amiable as well as most lovely creatures upon earth."

Lady Cecilia was unable to bear such bitter sarcasms, which would not admit of being misunderstood ; and replied, colouring with anger, " Pray, Miss Lyttleton, do you mean,—I trust you do not, any reflections upon this family ?"

" My meaning, madam, (coolly returned Miss Lyttleton,) is simply this, that Miss Claremont has some how, and by some body

body, been very ill treated. There needs very little penetration to see that; but whose fault it is, perhaps your ladyship can tell better than I."

Mr. Corbet just then came into the room, and put an end to the conversation, which was one of the most unpleasant Lady Cecilia ever had experienced. It mortified her in every point of view. She felt greatly alarmed on account of Lord Beaufort, and from seeing likewise very clearly that Miss Lyttleton would have an opinion of her own, which she had too much spirit to suppress, and would not scruple to give whenever she pleased; but we will for the present take leave of the inhabitants of Langley-Park, and return to Ethelinda.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

Rural Scenes, followed by a Journey to London. —
Surprise, — a Consternation, — a new Situation, and the
Effects of Vanity.

ETHELINDA had now been above a fortnight with Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher had entered into their way of life, and found, in the kindness and unremitted attention which she met with from them, no small portion of comfort, especially when she considered the cruel and unkind treatment from which she had escaped. — But though she was tranquil and serene, she was not really happy.

Her reason would have reconciled her to an humble situation, but the most tender feelings of her heart had been roused, and they would not now lie dormant.

In vain she tried to forget Lord Beaufort. She locked up his picture: she forced herself to refrain from looking at it for two days; but, unable to banish the original from her mind, she thought no great harm would ensue from indulging herself with looking at the resemblance of one whom she not only loved, but revered. To stand well in his opinion was her most earnest wish, and she was greatly surprised and hurt at not having had a single line from Miss Lyttleton. She could not any way account for it. The winter was now approaching, and she determined not to remain a burden upon Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher.

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She had written again to Mr. Hall, but might be sometime before she heard from him, and she was resolved to seek a maintenance

tenance in service, and thought the sooner she did so, the better, as she was never quite easy on account of Mr. Corbet, whose wicked plans she had too much reason to fear, while she remained in a place where he might so easily find her out.

She resolved immediately to impart her resolution to Mrs. Fletcher, who, she was fearful, would make some objection to it. In the evening, she began the subject, and mentioned all her reasons for wishing to put the plan in execution immediately. Mrs. Fletcher at first opposed it, but, seeing that Ethelinda was determined, said she would write to a person she knew in London who was a mantua-maker, and might be very likely to assist her in getting some eligible situation.

Mrs. Fletcher at first proposed writing to Miss Elford, who, she thought, would be happy to assist Ethelinda; but Ethelinda knew that Miss Elford was likely to be absent for some time; and, indeed, she preferred

preferred going among strangers, to forcing herself upon Miss Elford's humanity. It was therefore determined to write immediately to Mrs. Dawson, the person Mrs. Fletcher had mentioned.

They received an answer in a few days, offering a situation which appeared eligible. It was to be companion to a single lady, in bad health, who lived with a married sister, and resided in Portman-square.

Mrs. Sandford and Miss Williamson were daughters to an opulent banker. The elder had married Mr. Sandford, who was esteemed a man of sense, had a good estate, was respectable in every part of his character, except the having too great a love for play, which passion he pretty freely indulged.

Mrs. Sandford was weak, vain, pretty, and conceited. She wished to lead in fashions, and fancied that profusion in expence would insure her that sort of éclat, and give her that kind of consequence, she was

personally but little intitled to. Expence, more than true taste, decorated her house, her establishment, and herself. She was profuse in every thing, and would take an opportunity of telling her dear Lady Binglefield (who in reality hated her for it) how many hundreds a year her milliner's bills came to, as if the merit, elegance, or real fashion of a woman consisted in the enormity of her extravagance.

Miss Williamson was cast in a far better mould than her sister ; but the force of example constantly before her eyes, and the persuasions of folly continually in her ears, damped the blossoms that might otherwise have produced very different fruit.

She had, soon after her sister's marriage, encouraged the attentions of Capt. Fitzwilliams, a young man of genteel fortune and great merit, whose attachment to her became very great and sincere ; and, for a considerable time, she gave him the most flattering encouragement.

He was obliged to join his regiment, which was going to America. They parted, seemingly with mutual grief, and he considered himself as engaged to her. His parting adieus were given, as he thought, to his future wife, in case it pleased heaven that he should return.

After a few months, she was prevailed upon to receive the devoirs of Lord Boyne. His rank and estate had inestimable charms in the opinion of Mrs. Sandford, who managed to lead Marianne to act as if she felt the same, though her doing so was more from a want of firmness, than from any sentiments he had really inspired her with.

Marianne being by nature gentle, and of rather too flexible a disposition, would often be induced, by those she liked, to do what her judgment did not entirely approve. She had a far better understanding, and a much better heart, than her sister; but, from the influence of the above qualities, continually submitted to follow where she

ought to have led. In the present instance, Mrs. Sandford used every art she was mistress of to carry her point.

It had been some time since they heard from Capt. Fitzwilliams, this was construed into neglect. Many circumstances were supposed, and some invented, by Mrs. Sandford, to aid her purpose. In short, at last, she so far succeeded, that Marianne was prevailed upon to think no more of the treaty between her and Capt. Fitzwilliams, and to listen to the proposals of Lord Boyne.

When Capt. Fitzwilliams received the account, he was at first shocked into a state of stupefaction, and became almost distracted. But recollection determined him to submit without making any effort to alter her resolutions, he having every reason to suppose she acted from her own impulse.—But such was his love for her, that his life became a burthen; and a detachment, which he commanded, being ordered upon
a dangerous

a dangerous service, he was heard to say that he hoped never to return.

The night previous to the action, he made his will, and left Marianne a considerable legacy. He wrote her a letter, (which he ordered to be sent, in case of his death,) free from the upbraidings she might justly have expected, but expressive of his misery.

It reached her on the evening when she had been prevailed upon to fix her marriage for the following week. The party was only a select one. Mrs. Sandford was at cards, and Marianne employed in looking over prints with Lord Boyne, who was not an amiable young man, though very much inferior to Capt. Fitzwilliams.

She knew the hand, and trembled as she opened the letter, but had not read half its contents, before she was seized with such a universal tremor, as made it evident to Lord Boyne that there was something in the letter which greatly affected her.

He seized her hand, and begged to know what was the matter. She could only articulate, "I am very ill."

Her eyes lost their sight,—her senses were in a mist, and she sunk back into a chair. Mr. Sandford happened to be near, and helped to support her. He saw the letter which had fallen from her hand. A very slight inspection accounted to him for Marianne's situation. He put the letter into his pocket, and assisted in conveying her to her own apartment.

Mrs. Sandford soon followed, and wished in her thoughtless way, to have entered on the subject, but Marianne was too ill to admit of any conversation. A fever ensued during which her recovery was at times very doubtful. It left her in a weak languid state, and she continued pretty much in the same situation when Ethelinda went to her.

Her mind had undergone a considerable change. The horror she felt at being the occasion of Capt. Fitzwilliams's untimely fate, roused every latent spark of affection she had ever felt for him, and the enormity of her conduct appeared in the most glaring colours before her.

Lord Boyne, who had never been fully acquainted with the particulars of her attachment to Capt. Fitzwilliams, was greatly alarmed at her illness, and the circumstances of it. He begged of Mr. Sandford to inform him of the cause.

Mr. Sandford assured him that he should know every circumstance, but begged to postpone the communication till his sister was sufficiently recovered to act for herself, and he was sure she would judge and act properly ; but that, at any rate, Lord Boyne might depend upon his word, for not consenting to any concealments. Not so Mrs. Sandford. She was hurt at the mere idea of breaking off a marriage which she con-

sidered as so honourable to her sister and herself. She wished Mr. Sandford had burnt the cruel letter, that her poor sister's feelings might not again be disturbed with it.

Marianne, as soon as she was able, desired Mr. Sandford to tell Lord Boyne that something had happened which made it impossible for her to ratify the hasty engagements she had entered into with him.

Mrs. Sandford exclaimed, " Surely, my dear Marianne, you have too much sense to think any more about the letter. I think it would be quite absurd ; for what has your marrying Lord Boyne to do with it ?—Poor Capt. Fitzwilliams would have had the same fate. He would have been in the same action, and have suffered the same."

" Hold ! (cried Marianne ;) no more, no more ! I cannot bear the subject.—Wretch that I was ! Oh ! how could I—— ? but I accuse no one : I only was to blame."—

Tears

Tears and sobs choaked her words, and it was some time before she recovered ; but then desired to see Mr. Sandford. When he came, she informed him of her unalterable resolution, and thought it right not to keep Lord Boyne in suspense, in which Mr. Sandford agreed, and promised immediately to acquaint him with her determination.

Mrs. Sandford did not in her heart give up the hope that time would work a change in her sister's sentiments. She tried as much as she could to amuse her ; but, not liking to be dull herself, and finding this attention to her sister interfered too much with her own amusements, she thought it would be more pleasant for herself, and better for Marianne, to have some person to be constantly with her.

Our Ethelinda, in consequence of Mrs. Dawson's application, was the person fixed upon, and was desired to be in town as soon as possible.

As she had but few preparations to make, she resolved to set off the next morning but one, and was so lucky as to get a place in the stage for that day.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher felt sincere regret at parting with her. Mrs. Fletcher was almost broken hearted. When she recollected with what tenderness Ethelinda had been brought up, — the unhappy consequence that had attended the loss of the letter, — the injustice that she was fully convinced had been done her by Lady Cecilia — she could not help exclaiming against the severity of her fate, and was far less reconciled to it than Ethelinda herself, who took great pains to seem composed, and to enter with cheerfulness upon a plan which, however mortifying and unpleasant, she considered as necessary. She promised Mrs. Fletcher to seek an asylum with her, whenever she stood in need of one.

As she was to set off very early the next morning, they supped sooner than usual

usual. They all endeavoured to conceal their feelings, though they were almost choaking whenever they spoke, and tears would force their way whenever they endeavoured to smile.

Ethelinda was to set out at three o'clock in the morning, as she was to go six miles in a post-chaise to meet the stage. She was ready at half past two. The morning was very cold, but Mrs. Fletcher had got breakfast ready. She then, unable to hold out any longer, sobbed and cried to so great a degree, that she could hardly speak or see. Poor Ethelinda was at last quite overcome, and she likewise burst into tears.

“Come, come, (said Mr. Fletcher,) do, my good woman, compose yourself: you hurt Miss Claremont very much.—So good a lady will do well, in spite of all the present appearances.—Take comfort, — I am sure she will.”

“What I most fear (answered Mrs. Fletcher) is that villain Corbet. I think it

would be right to change her name, that he may not find her out."

Mr. Fletcher was of the same opinion; but Ethelinda said that she did not think it a necessary precaution at present, as it was not likely he should find out where she was gone, and she should most likely live very retired. Such a step would carry with it the appearance of deception, which she disliked, and at all events she must decline doing so, unless some future occurrence should justify it.

Mrs. Fletcher acquiesced, and the chaise being ready, after tenderly embracing her friend, she got into it, accompanied by Mr. Fletcher, who insisted upon seeing her safe into the stage.

The passengers were of the common order of beings, and no extraordinary occurrence happened, till they were within five miles of London, when, excepting Ethelinda,
one

one passenger only remained, who was likewise near her journey's end.

Unluckily at this time one of the wheels came off, and, by the shock, one of the axle-trees was broken. The horses, however, immediately stopped, and no material harm was done. The coachman, though thrown from his box, was not hurt; and, with the assistance of a man who was passing by, (for there happened to be no outside passengers,) he got the two ladies out of the coach.

Ethelinda was in great distress at hearing that it was impossible for the coach to proceed. The other passenger was an aged lady, who was in no distress, being within half a mile of her home. But, while Ethelinda was considering what she was to do, an empty chariot came by, and the coachman stopped to inquire what was the matter; and, seeing a young lady, whose appearance would generally interest even a stranger,

stranger, very much at a loss for a conveyance, offered to take her to town.

Being in such a situation, Ethelinda was much pleased with the offer, and very readily accepted it.

The coachman asked her where she was going, and, upon being told she was going into Marybone-Street, he assured her it was not in the least out of his way to carry her home, as he put up his horses close by.—She accordingly settled with the stage-coachman, and had her luggage, which was not very considerable, put into the chariot. Ethelinda felt that this was one of the most lucky among trifling incidents that could have happened to her, little foreseeing the unfortunate consequences that it would produce.

As they were stopping to pay a turnpike a gentleman on horseback came slowly up. He looked into the carriage, and started almost from off his horse.

Ethelinda

Ethelinda in a moment recognised Lord Beaufort. She was going to speak, but, seeing him turn very pale, without making the slightest advance towards the carriage, her consternation was so great, that she could not articulate a word. She trembled, grew giddy, and was near fainting; and, for some minutes, remained motionless.

On recovering herself, she put her head out of the window, and saw him standing still, looking after the carriage, but making no attempt to follow it.

“ Good heaven ! (cried she to herself,) what is the meaning of this ! How unlike this behaviour to that which I have seen in Lord Beaufort !—What can have changed him ?—To pass me not unnoticed, and yet totally to neglect, — not even to speak to me ! — What can such conduct arise from ? ”

The most perplexing thoughts agonized her mind, and she arrived at Mrs. Dawson's,
ignorant

ignorant of having advanced ten yards from the time she had seen Lord Beaufort.

The door was opened by a maid-servant. Ethelinda inquired if Mrs. Dawson was at home. The maid answered in the affirmative, and begged to know if she wished to speak to her mistress. Ethelinda said that she believed Mrs. Dawson expected her. The maid replied, that her mistress did expect a young person from the country, but she did not think it could be her.

In fact, the elegant chariot, and the elegant appearance of Ethelinda, in spite of the studied plainness of her dress, carried a very different appearance from that of a young woman in the situation Ethelinda had been described.

She immediately, however, alighted ; and, after rewarding the coachman for the service he had done her, and begging him to assist in bringing in her trunks, followed the maid up-stairs

Mrs.

Mrs. Dawson and her sister had, when young, lived in the same village with Mrs. Fletcher. The sister had kept up a constant correspondence with Mrs. Fletcher until her death, which happened a few months since. Mrs. Dawson, who was much younger, had made an imprudent marriage, and been much reduced; but, having a natural turn for dress, she entered into partnership with a mantua-maker, and happening accidentally to please one or two ladies of fashion, soon became one of the most fashionable mantua-makers in London.

She received Ethelinda with great civility, and soon entered into a description of the Sandford family. She expatiated upon the elegance of Mrs. Sandford, the ill health of Miss Williamson, and the generosity of Mr. Sandford, concluding her description by an assurance that it would be a most comfortable situation for our heroine, who was in no condition to contradict, and, indeed, scarcely able to attend to, any thing that was

was said. She accepted Mrs. Dawson's offer of tea, but apologized for retiring immediately afterwards, under the pretence of being greatly fatigued; but said she should wait upon her at breakfast the next morning. Mrs. Dawson readily acquiesced, and shewed her to her apartment.

It was now, perhaps, that our poor heroine experienced one of the bitterest moments of her life. Thrown among strangers, in a situation so uncomfortable, without a friend near her, was in itself sufficient to sink her spirits; but to have received such a mortification, from the person whose good opinion she was so anxious to preserve, whom in spite of every obstacle, she could not help loving;—to have received such a proof of neglect from him, was more than she could bear with composure.

She passed the night in forming conjectures of the cause.—He was certainly agitated, and she suspected that, owing to some base misrepresentation, she had lost his good opinion

opinion; and her never having had a line from Miss Lyttleton, she considered as a very extraordinary circumstance. However, as she had no way of unravelling the mystery, she remained lost in conjecture.

Towards morning, in consequence of so much fatigue, both in body and mind, she got some sleep, and arose more composed than when she went to bed. About two o'clock they went to Mrs. Sandford's, and were shewn into the parlour. After waiting about half an hour, they were conducted to that lady's dressing-room, who immediately entered into conversation with our heroine.

She told her Mrs. Dawson had spoken of her in high terms, and she had therefore been very anxious for her arrival; that her sister's health was very indifferent, but her spirits much worse, and it was necessary to have somebody constantly with her, who could amuse her.

"For my part, (continued Mrs. Sandford,) it makes me so uneasy to see her, that her lowness of spirits quite infects me; but I hope you will manage better, and persuade her

her to come among her friends ; she mopes so much alone, that it is enough to kill her. You must try to make her cheerful, and never indulge her in melancholy."

Ethelinda said she should be very happy if her endeavours to amuse Miss Williamfon should prove successful.

Mrs. Sandford then desired Ethelinda to follow her to her sister's apartment. When they entered, Mrs. Sandford said, " I have brought you, sister, the young person I mentioned a few days ago. I hope she will suit you ; but I will leave you together, as Dawson is in my dressing-room, and I want to speak to her about a dress I must have to-morrow ; but I shall soon return again."

Ethelinda had been struck, when she entered the room, by the appearance of Marianne. She laid, half-reclined, on a blue-stain sofa, in an elegant, though seemingly unstudied, deshabille.

She

She appeared rather tall and thin. Her countenance was pensive, but her features beautiful, and there was an air of languor in her manner, which seemed to take its rise from a melancholy turn of mind.

She raised herself from the reclining posture she had been in, and, with a smile of ineffable sweetness, which at once made its way to the heart of Ethelinda, begged her to be seated.

“You are (continued she) the young lady my sister mentioned as being willing to live with me as a companion. If I may be allowed to judge from appearances, I shall have every reason to be satisfied. But I fear so dull a life as I lead, and (continued she, the tears standing in her eyes) shall ever lead, while I exist, will not be agreeable to you.”

“Indeed, madam, (replied Ethelinda, who was charmed with her manner,) it is my wish to live retired ; and it will be my greatest pleasure, if, in your retirement, I can fortunately assist in giving you any amusement. I have seen but very little of
the

the world, and that little has not made me anxious to enter much into it."

"Well, then, (returned Marianne,) I shall have real pleasure and comfort in your society, for I own I never can enjoy the company of any person, when I think I am depriving them of a more agreeable party, or of doing what they would like better."

They entered into further conversation, and were mutually pleased with each other. Marianne finding that Ethelinda had no occasion, nor any wish, to return to Mrs. Dawson's, she proposed her continuing there, and sending for her things, which Ethelinda agreed to, but said she thought it would be right to speak to Mrs. Dawson. Marianne, being of the same opinion, rang her bell, and said when Mrs. Dawson was at leisure, Miss Claremont would speak to her.

Mrs. Sandford just then came in, and hearing what had been determined, told Ethelinda she would find Mrs. Dawson in

the dressing-room, and that she would stay with her sister till she returned. Ethelinda thanked Mrs. Dawson for the situation she had procured her; and every thing, as to her remaining at Mr. Sandford's, being settled, Ethelinda returned to Marianne, who had been expressing her approbation of her to Mrs. Sandford.

She replied, she liked her appearance well enough, and hoped she would suit her.

Ethelinda had declined any positive favour. The idea crossed her feelings unpleasantly, and she desired, when it was mentioned by Marianne, that it might be left to future consideration. She soon became a great favourite with Marianne, for whom she felt sincerely interested; and, indeed, she was a most interesting object.—In the bloom of life, withering and sinking to the tomb, a victim more to her want of firmness than her want of principle,—for the latent principles of her heart were good.—She proved that she possessed the strongest feelings, though they had been neglected, and

and lain dormant in her mind, until so fatally roused. In fact, she was a martyr to her sister's vanity. She would be for hours without speaking a word, while the tears ran down her cheeks, which she would gently wipe off, and never seem to check, as if she thought they were a tribute continually due to her dead Fitzwilliams.

CHAP

CHAP. X.

A modern assembly—modern manners—and modern feelings.

MRS. SANDFORD insisted upon it, that, if Marianne would go into company, she would be much better ; and sometimes, therefore, to please her sister, she acquiesced in what was really repugnant to her feelings.—Mrs. Sandford now meditated upon a party that was to be more than usually elegant.—She expected the Prince of Wales ; and every luxury that vanity could suggest, or extravagance procure, was prepared for

VOL. II. K the

the occasion.—She had been importunate with her sister to join the party, who was, at first, very averse to it ; but her complying temper at last led her so far to give way to her sister's entreaties, as to promise to go into the rooms for some part of the evening, and she insisted upon Ethelinda's accompanying her. The day at last arrived, that was to be so gratifying to the pride of Mrs. Sandford, and so amusing to her numerous friends ; friends who, three fourths of them, from one motive or another, ridiculed her and her party and friends, who could one moment partake of the luxuries she presented, and the next join in laughing at her for having them.—The band of music in the hall was excellent. The rooms were highly illuminated, and the ball room in particular displayed a great deal of studied expence —The wreaths of artificial flowers, made so admirably, as almost to rival nature, hung amidst lustres, girandoles and pictures, and they all together formed a blaze and glow of colours, the first coup d'oeil of which, completely dazzled the eyes, and for some time rendered them unable to distinguish

any thing. Mrs. Sandford's toilette had employed her 'till pretty late.—Yet she had been forced to yawn away some time before the pleasures of the evening began. At ten o'clock, however, a few of the least fashionable of her acquaintance came in ;—each lamented the late hours that were kept ; each proclaimed aloud their admiration of the house ;—admired to her the elegant taste of the rooms—and to their next neighbour sneered out, “ what a monstrous expence ! ” “ and half of it,” said Mrs. Petworth, “ I think, might very well have been spared, for it is monstrously over done.”

“ Dear me,” replied Lady Brookton, who was really well-bred and good humoured, “ I think it quite beautiful, and very much out of the common way—so Frenchy ;—though, to be sure, it must have cost a vast deal ;—but that Mrs. Sandford don't mind.”

“ No,” replied Mrs. Petworth, “ it would be as well if she did.”

“ Why, to be sure,” answered Lady Brookton, “ she has a very large family, but Mr. Sandford has a very large fortune.”

“He had,” replied Mrs. Petworth, “a very good estate;—but it is a good deal dipped, I believe; and her fortune, I understand, fell far short of what was imagined;—and he plays so very high——.”

“But is supposed to win,” replied Lady Brookton.

“No, no,” answered Mrs. Petworth, “he has lost very much lately—and the fortunes of men who play, must of course be very uncertain.”

Just then Mrs. Sandford came up, making apologies for not having set the commerce party down sooner.

“My dear Mrs. Sandford,” cried Mrs. Petworth, taking her by the hand, “do you want some of the most beautiful silk for the furniture of a dressing-room, that ever was seen?”

“What colour is it, Madam?” returned Mrs. Sandford.—“I don’t much want it, but if it’s very pretty, I should like to see it.”

“Oh

"Oh! it's beautiful," replied Mrs. Petworth;—"I am sure you'll have it, if you see it; and it will just suit you, I think."

"Well," said Mrs. Sandford, "I'll beg the favour of you to tell me where I can see it;—but hearing the Duchefs of D—— announced, she added—I will speak to you again presently," and left her, to receive the Duchefs.

Mrs. Petworth, turning to Lady Brookton, said, "I think she might have set us down; there are several commerce players come in."

"I fancy," replied Lady Brookton, "she waits for Mrs. Jackson, who promised to come early:—But my dear Mrs. Petworth, I hope you are to be at Mrs. Prin's on Sunday.—We are to play for the sweetest muslin I ever saw; and Mrs. Thomson has a painted petticoat she means to have played for."

"Oh! yes, I shall be there," replied Mrs. Petworth;—"but I believe I shall quarrel with commerce, it uses me so horridly."

"Oh! replied Lady Brookton, "I think nothing of that—one has one's turn."

Mrs. Sandford then appeared again, and set the party down, who then turned their faculties solely to attention to their business.

Business indeed—and the acting part of the scene not perfectly unlike the Stock Exchange. The technical terms of each only differ—at one place—Bank Stock, 3 per cents. Long Annuities, and Consols—At the other—Whist, Cribbage, Commerce, Loo, or Faro, have equally the power of rendering the heart dead to every affection, and callous to every feeling but what they inspire.—Few persons came to this assembly without an intention of entering into the *commercial* part of it.—Mrs. Stanley, however, happened to be one. Civility and connexion sometimes carried her into these circles, where she derived her amusement from the observations she made, and was particularly attentive to the manœuvres of a whist-table, close to which she was sitting. She was attracted by a lady's excessive displeasure against

against her unfortunate partner, with whose play she was finding unceasing fault."

"Why, Sir," said she, "did not you play the diamond? That was what I wanted;—we should have made two more tricks."

"But Ma'am," replied Captain Ashley, "unless I had seen your hand, how was it possible for me to know that?"

"Dear me," cried Mrs. Fume, "why did you play a club.—I never saw such play;—it is impossible I should ever win a rubber, if one's partner plays in that manner.—A club was the worst card you could play."

"Ma'am, I had nothing else to lead at that time."—"Well, it ruined my hand," said Mrs. Fume.

"But, Madam," said one of her adversaries, "the gentleman had nothing else in his hand;—how could he——."

"Why should you interfere, Sir," cried Mrs. Fume, stopping the poor man in a moment.—"My partner can, I see, justify himself;—but I never can win—no, I never can," and then she whined about her ill-luck, and her partner's bad play, 'till the rubber

ended ;—and though Captain Ashley was naturally well-bred, and knew the attention due to women, he could not forbear exclaiming, “ It is not usual to rejoice at losing one’s money ;—but I am heartily glad we lost this rubber : ”—Then turning to Mrs. Stanley, with whom he was acquainted, he asked her if she did not pity him ?

“ Yes,” replied she, “ and every one who has poor Mrs. Fudge for a partner—with excellent sense—the renders herself, by such uncontrouled peevishness, ridiculous and unpleasant ; and I cannot help thinking, a little pains would get the better of it ;—but as I am no player myself, I am not, perhaps, a judge how far the temper may be tried upon such occasions ;—and indeed, by what I see, that is as great an objection as any to even moderate play.”

u “ I am no enemy to it as an amusement, Madam,” replied Captain Ashley ;—“ nor have our sex, I think, much right to find fault with your’s, for following an example set by themselves ; rigour may make distinctions, but reason cannot justify the husband in spending

in spending his hours and loosing his money at Brookes's, and at the same time condemn the wife for losing a hundred pounds at a private assembly.—The conversation was interrupted by Mrs. Sandford desiring Captain Ashley to play another rubber.—He declined it.—She then applied to a lady who was sitting near; but she likewise refused, alledging, that her carriage was waiting, and the night so bad, that she did not like to keep out her servants and horses.

“Well, my dear, I am quite surprised,” replied Mrs. Sandford, “to hear you make that objection—it is impossible to mind those things.—As for our servants, they are used to be out.—One's horses, indeed.—I own I was sorry to make mine wait last night so long, near seven hours—they are so handsome.”

“Handsome !” cried Mrs. Stanley, “does that make any difference ?”

“Why really I think somehow it does—it sounds odd—but one feels so much more in keeping handsome creatures in the cold—particularly if they are one's own.”

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“That,

“That, I think, makes no difference,” replied Mrs. Stanley, “as they all feel the same, I fancy.”

“Well, I don’t know how it is,” cried Mrs. Sandford; “but I think it makes a great difference; for if one loses a handsome horse, one is so much more sorry, you know, than for an ugly one;—and with that sensible sentiment, she turned to impart her refined feelings to some other friend.

Marianne and Ethelinda were now come into the room;—to the latter it was a perfectly new and a very brilliant sight. She had seen fine houses, but she had never seen any so decorated or so filled; and her attention was engrossed by the novelty of the scene.

Marianne, to whom it had not the charms of novelty, felt very different sensations.—It reminded her of past scenes; of those scenes too, which had given rise to her present state of mind and health;—and as gaiety makes a light heart still lighter, so it adds weight to
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one that is oppressed, and she sat a prey to the most melancholy sensations. She would soon have returned to her own apartment, had she not perceived that Ethelinda (to whom she was become really attached) was entertained, and was unwilling to deprive her of any amusement. They were to sup at one o'clock, and it was nearly that hour. Mrs. Sandford evidently appeared (though she endeavoured to conceal it) in a state of much anxiety. Her eyes were continually turned towards the door, and she impatiently watched the arrival of the Prince. She expected him every moment—had made it more than half the subject of her conversation, to every one she had spoken to, for nearly the last two hours. She was speaking to some foreigners who were just come in, when the Duchess of D——— came up to her, and expressed how extremely concerned she was at being obliged to go away.

“ To go away, my dear Madam ; “ I hope I did not understand your Grace.”

“ Oh ! my dear Mrs. Sandford,” cried the Duchess, “ it is my loss to be forced to leave

so charming a party.—I am grieved at it ;—but it is quite impossible for me to stay.”

Just then a servant delivered a note to Mrs. Sandford ;—it was from Col. ——— to say how much concerned the Prince was, that he could not attend her that evening.—Various changes in her countenance instantly betrayed the agitation of her mind.—She coloured deeper than her rouge ; she felt a dreadful shock, and tears almost started in her eyes ;—but she had the power of suppressing them—though, in consequence of doing so, her voice almost failed her.—At last she said, “ It’s very unlucky, indeed ;—something particular must have occurred.”

“ What, my dear Mrs. Sandford, is the matter,” cried Lady Clifden, and several others, in a breath ;—“ nothing has happened, I hope.

“ No, Ma’am,” answered Mrs. Sandford, endeavouring to recover herself ;—“ only the Prince cannot come.—Something particular must have prevented him, or I am sure he would have been here.”

She

She then walked away, to conceal her vexation.

“ Indeed,” said Mrs. Thompson, “ I do think it is abominable to be disappointed so, and very wrong in him, unless it is something very particular.”

“ Well,” cried Mrs. Petworth, who happened to have lost her pool, “ if people, who have no pretensions to entertain Princes, will put themselves very much out of the way, and to a great expence, to do so, I don't pity them for their disappointment.”

“ But if,” replied Mrs. Thompson, “ Princes chuse to put themselves upon the footing of visiting people so much out of their line, they should not treat them so cavalierly.”

“ The Prince,” said Captain Ashley, “ is so elegant, so perfect in every point of good-breeding, that I am surprised he occasionally suffers himself unnecessarily to break engagements he had better not have made, than afterwards avoid in such a manner. Trifles of that sort make him more unpopular than

he is aware of; for people will often feel less hurt by a real misfortune, than from wounded pride. I know the Prince (continued Captain Ashley) to possess some such good qualities, as can only be derived from an excellence of heart.—Among many instances of it, I have noticed the affection which he warmly retains for a valued friend (a worthy *patron* of mine) who has been long since dead;—but whose virtues and merits not only live in his memory, but are still the frequent subjects of his highest commendation:—And where the heart is alive to feelings of that nature, it must, doubtless, be the receptacle of other virtues.”

“ You are a warm advocate for the Prince, Captain Ashley,” said Mrs. Petworth.

“ Yes, Madam—because I think his errors, without making allowance for the seducing temptations of his situation, are magnified enormously; and I have seen traits in the Prince, that convince me his virtue will e’er long, rise superior to those failings which have brought upon him more severity of censure, than, in my opinion, they deserve

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That he possesses good sense, cannot be doubted ; and I trust it will, when aided by experience and reflection, render him a blessing and an honour to his country."

Here the conversation ended ; for the commerce table again summoned it's votaries.—Mrs. Sandford's feelings of exultation now gave place to mortification and ill humour ;—her party was deprived of it's brightest ornament, and would not be talked of—or, considered in the same stile, as if the Prince had been there.—The splendid elegance and profusion of the supper gave her no delight.—The disappointment, in not having the honour of the Prince's company, and the absence of a few others of the most fashionable people, who had been invited, turned the expected festivity of the evening into a scene of complete mortification to her ; but we must now leave Mrs. Sandford to her own feelings, while we return to our Heroine.

CHAP. XI.

In which some old acquaintances make their appearance, not much to the satisfaction of any party—followed by some events, which, if they do not touch the compassion of our Readers, we must either tell our tale very ill, or their compassion is not very easily moved.

ETHELINDA had sat the chief part of the evening with Marianne, who was of course spoken to by a considerable part of the company, and it was impossible for Ethelinda to pass unnoticed. She attracted, indeed, very general attention and admiration, and had many times been solicited to dance, but having many reasons against doing so constantly

constantly refused, though Marianne urged her to it several times. She was sitting in the ball-room, very near the dancers, and talking to a lady, who was just going to begin, when, turning round, she perceived, standing close to her, Mr. Corbet.—A sudden horror seized her, and a cold thrill ran through her whole frame—but she had not a moment to recover herself, for he instantly recognized her, and coming up to her, said, “It is indeed Miss Claremont, or (continued he) more properly, perhaps, Miss Claremont that was.”

He might have gone on for ever; Ethelinda could not speak—she turned pale—she trembled—she felt almost suffocated—Marianne saw her agitation, though ignorant of the cause.—She exclaimed, “Good Heaven! my dear Miss Claremont, you are not well—what is the matter!”

“Nothing—nothing,” replied Ethelinda; “I am very well—indeed I am.”

“Permit me, Miss Claremont,” cried Mr. Corbet, “since I find I may still address you

you by that name.—Permit me, Madam, to offer my services.”

“ I have not the least occasion, Sir, to trouble you,” said Ethelinda.

“ Oh ! Miss Claremont,” said Mr. Corbet, sitting himself down in a chair close to her, “ and have I found you at last ; you know not what I have suffered, in consequence of the step you took—the cause of it so unexplained.”

“ I do not know, Sir, that you can have any right to call upon me for explanations, nor that I am amenable to you for any step that I chuse to take.”

“ It is too true, Miss Claremont, “ you are not amenable to me—would to Heaven you were ; but, as I cannot help having the most tender interest in every thing that concerns you, my feelings ought, in justice, rather to excite your pity than your anger.”

“ It is not likely, Sir, that you should excite the former of those sentiments in me, and I hope I shall never have future cause for the other.”

“ Your

"Your severity, Madam," returned Mr. Corbet, "surely I do not deserve, unless the most perfect love and admiration draw it upon me."

"I must beg, Sir," replied Ethelinda, "to hear no more on that subject"—and turning to Marianne, who was engaged in conversation with another lady, she asked her if it was not near the hour she thought of retiring?

"Why I think, my dear," replied Marianne, "now we are here, and it is so late, that you shall see the supper;—and I have a friend here, whom I have not seen for a long time."

Ethelinda was unwilling to check the unusual cheerfulness that appeared in Marianne, but felt, in her heart, very much distressed at remaining in the room, and liable to be spoken to by the man whose conversation she dreaded, and whose presence was almost insupportable to her—Luckily for her, just then, a gentleman desired to speak a word with him, and Ethelinda contrived to get a lady to come and sit near her—and managed so

so well, that Mr. Corbet never got another opportunity of speaking to her during the remainder of the night. Ethelinda, a few minutes after, having risen to speak to a lady, a gentleman passed close to her, but turning immediately back, exclaimed, " Good Heavens! Miss Claremont—May I, Madam (continued he, colouring very deeply) take the liberty of inquiring after your health ;—though it is so long since I had the happiness of seeing you, that you may not remember I have any title to that honour."

" Captain Ashley," replied Ethelinda, " does me great injustice, if he supposes I have forgotten the civilities I received from him—and at a time too——."

She could not finish what she meant to have said, for recollection strangled articulation. Captain Ashley saw that she was affected, and was himself in the greatest surprise. It must be remembered, that particular business had prevented him from returning to Langley Park, and the death of Lady Falkner again obliged him to defer his intentions

intentions.—He was likewise obliged to go to Ireland, and was detained there longer than he expected, but wrote to Lady Cecilia as soon as he returned, which was the week after Ethelinda left Newton Hall.—He begged Lady Cecilia's permission to pay his respects to her, intimating a wish for an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with Miss Claremont.—Lady Cecilia wrote, that she had eloped from her, but did not know with whom—and knew nothing more of her, than that she had proved ungrateful and unworthy, and well justified Lady Falkner's altered opinion of her, which had appeared in the latter part of her life. Captain Ashley was greatly shocked at receiving such a letter; he had no reason to suspect the source of it; and yet his mind refused assenting to the aspersions upon a young creature, who had appeared to him so particularly amiable;—but as he had not power to investigate the truth, he was forced to submit to the dictates of his reason, and endeavour to forget Miss Claremont.—She frequently, however, occupied his mind;—and the moment he
saw

saw her, he forgot every thing he had heard against her, and was sensible only to the pleasure which the sight of her afforded him.—When the first embarrassment of their meeting was over, they entered into conversation with nearly the same ease as formerly ; but though he longed to know what had happened to her, it was impossible for him then to attain that knowledge ;—he concluded she was not married ; for he had several times addressed her as Miss Claremont, and she had answered to it, without any apparent hesitation.—He ventured to ask her if she made any stay in town.—She replied, that she knew nothing to the contrary.—He asked what part of the town she lived in.—This, replied she, is my home. Captain Ashley was more perplexed than ever.—However, he resolved to find out the nature of her situation, &c. from Mr. Sandford, with whom he was intimately acquainted.—He attended the ladies to the supper-room ; and as soon as supper was over, Marianne proposed retiring to, which Ethelinda most gladly acceded. She entered her apartment

ment far less composed than she had come out of it.—On considering the events of the evening, she supposed that Mr. Corbet's meeting with her was accidental ; but in fact that was not the case ; for, to the circumstance of the stage-coach breaking down, she owed his finding her out. The chariot that so opportunely came up to her assistance, was Mr. Corbet's.—Some considerable time after, the coachman, who had lived but a short time with Mr. Corbet, happened to relate the circumstance before Duval, mentioning Ethelinda's name.—The officious valet immediately asked every necessary question, and flew with the intelligence to his master, and welcome was the information.—Mr. Corbet soon took such steps as enabled him to find out the abode of Ethelinda—but unfortunately he was not acquainted with Mrs. Sandford :—However, that was a difficulty very soon got over—and he was not without hopes, that, from the situation in which he found Ethelinda, he should be able to persuade her to change, for one more suitable to his wishes ;

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that

that she would not find a state of dependence more desirable here than at Langley Park; and, from this further trial of it, might possibly be less reluctant to accede to his proposals.—As she never went out, except in the morning, with Miss Williamfon, he would have found it very difficult to have taken her away in any clandestine manner; and he altogether thought it better, at first, to try persuasion, and what he thought temptation.

Captain Ashley was under the greatest perplexity;—he could not account for Mr Sandford's being Ethelinda's home, nor reconcile it with an idea of her having, in any manner, disgraced herself;—for though Mrs Sandford's foolish trifling conduct gave her little claim to respect, yet she was not likely to receive, as an inmate, any person of bad character; and he had observed that Miss Williamfon seemed upon the most friendly footing with her. When they were withdrawn, he went in search of Mr. Corbet, who had been much chagrined at seeing him there, and at his having sat by Ethelinda during the supper.

supper, and was deeply engaged in thinking of it, and of his future schemes, when Captain Ashley accosted him.

“ I am much surpris'd,” continued he, “ after the letter I received from Lady Cecilia, at meeting Miss Claremont here.—Do pray, Corbet, account for it.”

“ That is more than I may chuse to do,” replied Mr. Corbet.—“ For though, doubtless, a disinterested person, yet, as the girl has in some measure patched up her affairs, I should not chuse to be the person to blow her, and thereby hinder her of a decent maintenance.”

“ A decent maintenance !” returned Captain Ashley :—“ What do you mean ?”

“ Why, I mean, that after the imprudence of her conduct, she has contrived to get recommended to Miss Williamson, and is now in the capacity of her companion ;—and it would be cruel to inform the world of what, perhaps, she is now sorry enough for.”

“ Sorry enough for ! Why, whom did she elope with ?”

VOL. II.

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“ Indeed,

“Indeed, my dear Ashley, you must excuse me entering into particulars ; I will only add, that Lady Falkner had changed her opinion of her so totally, that she left her scarcely any thing.—My mother was, however, inclined to shew her every kindness, as long as it was possible for her to do so ; but after her conduct at our house, and the leaving it in the manner she did, it was impossible for Lady Cecilia to take any further notice of her.”

Just then, Mr. Sandford came up to the gentlemen, to ask Mr. Corbet to dance, and put an end to a conversation that had answered his purpose, and created in Capt. Ashley far greater astonishment ;—for though he had no reason to doubt the truth of what Mr. Corbet said, yet he found it still difficult to think ill of a woman who had appeared every way so deserving, —and he left the house, dissatisfied with human nature.

Our poor Heroine little imagined what increased injustice had been done her, tho

felt her aversion and dread of Mr. Cor-
still greater than ever ; the sight of him
distressed her, and she was greatly ap-
prehensive that he would renew his plots
against her.—She determined, to be very
much upon her guard, and, if possible, never
go out without Miss Williamson, whose
health every day grew worse, and seemed
sliding fast to the unhappy state of her
mother. She did not, indeed, endeavour to
turn to the feelings, that were un-
dermining her life, but began now to employ
her thoughts in reflecting deeply upon the
expectation of a future state—the observance
of the common forms of religion, so far as
going a few times in the year to church, and
imagining herself a Christian, though she
knew not why she was such—and exclaim-
ing against the methodists, though she knew
what the word meant—had made up her
religious tenets ;—but when she found every
pleasant prospect was fading before her, she
asked herself if she should ever be likely again
to behold her Fitzwilliams.—Whether she
should be so—was the next question that

agitated her thoughts. She wished to gain information upon those important subjects which, 'till now, had never found a place in her mind. She asked Ethelinda to procure her some books upon those sacred points, and appeared now extremely anxious to see what ground she had to hope for happiness in the future.—Indeed it was Ethelinda who had, by degrees, led her to reflect on these subjects.—Marianne, it is true, seemed lost to the pleasures of this world, but had not, now, turned her thoughts towards another. Her sister, though many years older, had still less reflection, and equally under the influence of an education conducted by a father, whose pride was to think, and please, to live, freely.—Mrs. Sandford thought she shewed her regard, by endeavouring to divert Marianne's mind from every serious thought. She insisted upon changing the furniture of her apartment from blue to crimson, "to give a glow to her complexion."—She exhorted her continually to wear some dress, and seemed anxious "that she should quit this stage of life in the most becoming and disha-

habille, and appear elegant even in the languishment of death ;"—but Marianne seemed every day more inclined to think upon the most serious of all human considerations, in spite of Mrs. Sandford's endeavours to divest her mind of them.

It was not often that she read the newspapers ; but having heard of something in the Times that she wished to look at, she sent for it. Ethelinda was busily occupied writing out some music at a table near the sofa, on which Marianne lay, when, all at once, she was roused, by hearing her exclaim, " Wretch—wretch that I am—it was—I was the wretch who caused it—yes, yes, it was."

" What ! my dear Madam," interrogated Ethelinda, " is the matter ?"

" Oh !" cried Marianne, putting one hand to her head, and the other to her heart—Oh ! my lost, my for ever lost Fitzwilliams—my dead love, I have murdered you. Yet—yet I loved you—yes I did—too late I find that I did so—but I did not de-

serve you, wicked as I was to desert you—
Why did I? for it was against my will—ye
indeed—indeed it was.”

She then sunk down, and seemed quite
lost.—Ethelinda tried to rouse her; and
after many efforts, in a degree succeeded.

Marianne pointed to the newspaper—and
throwing her handkerchief over her face
seemed to endeavour to compose herself.

Ethelinda took up the paper, and found
saw the following paragraph :

“ It is said, that the late gallant Colonel
“ Fitzwilliams, who fought so desperately
“ and so successfully, in the West Indies,
“ to have a tomb erected to his memory
“ Westminster Abbey.—It is said, of this
“ distinguished officer, that an ill regulated
“ attachment, he had vainly endeavoured
“ subdue, was the cause of that desperate
“ which, so much beyond common courage
“ brought him to an early grave.”

Ethelinda

Ethelinda retired to the end of the room, to conceal emotions which she had not the power of suppressing ; and it was some time before she dared turn towards the sofa on which poor Marianne lay, in all the horrors of despair.—She lay almost at length, one hand supporting her head—the other, half-lifted up, in an attitude of supplication, with her eyes turned towards Heaven. As Ethelinda stood by her, she heard her articulate, in a whisper, “ Forgive me—Oh ! forgive me—and take me.”

Ethelinda sunk on her knees, and taking her hand, kissed it, and burst into a flood of tears.—It roused Marianne, who, turning to her, fell on her bosom, and gave such vent to her feelings, as, in some degree, relieved them.

A few minutes after, Mrs. Sandford came in, and seeing, by the countenance of each, that melancholy had been their companion, she exclaimed, “ Really, Miss Claremont, you encourage my sister in her low spirits—

you had much better try to amuse her.— You will find the new comedy in my dressing-room—do fetch it, and read it to her.”

Marianne said, “ she was not well enough to listen to it,” and indeed soon grew so feverish, and the pain in her side increased so much, that she went to bed very ill, Dr. Warren was sent for, who declared himself much more alarmed for her than he had hitherto been—and that, as soon as the present unpleasant symptoms abated, she must be removed to Bristol.—Ethelinda attended her with unremitting care, and, in a few days, she grew so much better, that her removal to Bristol was again urged by Mr. and Mrs. Sandford.

Marianne said, “ she was willing to go there, if it were her wish, provided she would not think of accompanying her ;—and indeed it was almost impossible she should do so, as she expected, very shortly, to be confined.—Mrs. Sandford, therefore, acquiesced ;—at the same time assuring Marianne, that she should have been very glad to have accompanied

panied her, had it been in her power ;—and added, that she felt much satisfaction in being sure that Miss Claremont would take the greatest care of her.—It was then determined that she should go as soon as possible, and the day after the next was fixed upon for her setting out.

The morning after, while Ethelinda was in her own apartment, making preparations for the Bristol journey, a servant came to inform her that a gentleman desired to speak to her.—Mr. Corbet instantly rushed into her mind—but she had no idea that he would attempt to see her in that way, as she knew he was but little acquainted with the family.—She had never had any visitors, since she had been at Mrs. Sandford's, and did not think of ordering herself to be denied.—She followed the servant to the parlour, and, upon opening the door, was inexpressibly shocked at the sight of Mr. Corbet.—She would have retreated ;—but he flew towards her, and taking her hand, “ Do not, Madam,” cried he, “ mortify me by such re-

pulsive looks.—What have I done, to create such anger—such evident marks of displeasure?”

“Consult your own heart, Sir,” replied Ethelinda, “and you can be at no loss to account for the anger and displeasure you complain of—your present conduct would well justify it;—but, reprehensible as that is, you well know that I have still greater cause of offence.”

“I am glad, my dearest Miss Claremont, (replied Mr. Corbet,) refers me to my own heart, which I can swear glows with fervent love towards her;—and it’s most ardent wish is, to be allowed to prove it’s sincerity.”

“I cannot thank *you*, Sir, circumstanced as we both are, for the expression of sentiments, which, from any other person, I should think, at least, conferred an obligation upon me.”

“But, my angel, why will you not put it in my power to oblige you;—why will you continue to live in a state of dependence when every degree of affluence, in the power of my fortune, awaits your acceptance.—

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The ambitious views of my family make it impossible for me, at present, to offer you, publicly, the situation your merits intitle you to—but at some future period, I shall have it in my power, and you will not surely doubt my inclination, to do you justice—and in——.”

“Stop, Sir,” cried Ethelinda, “insult me no longer—but know, were you master of the universe, and would raise me to a throne, I should reject your offers—for I would never unite myself to a man whom my heart despises—nor will I longer subject myself to such unworthy treatment.”

She instantly ’rose and quitted the room, before Mr. Corbet was able to stop her—he well knew no power he had would induce her to return, and had nothing to do but to get out of the house as fast as he could, dreading lest he should meet any of the family, not being well prepared for the questions such a rencounter might produce.—The moment our poor Heroine reached her chamber, she burst into tears, and gave vent to the feel-

ings of her oppressed heart.—At such a time, it was impossible for her not to call to her mind her unhappy and unprotected situation.

“ Unhappy creature,” she exclaimed, “ marked out for enduring such singular calamities, and brought on by a concurrence of such strange events.”

The most cutting reflections obtruded themselves, and she almost gave way to dependency.—She thought of Mr. Hall.—He was indeed, very often in her thoughts; but it was so long since she had heard from him, that she was under great anxiety on his account.

“ What will become of me?” she cried, as she lifted her eyes, drowned in tears, to Heaven—and the piety of her heart, at that moment, gave her an impulse, like emanation, from on high;—she threw herself upon her knees, and implored protection from that being whom she truly adored.—She soon after became more composed, and returned

to

to the employment from which she had been so disagreeably interrupted.

When the day for going to Bristol arrived, Mrs. Sandford took an affectionate leave of Marianne; for, in reality, she loved her nearly as well as she was capable of loving any thing besides fashion and gaiety.

They arrived at Bristol, Marianne, Miss Claremont, a man, and a maid servant, and were soon settled in Albemarle-row; but the journey had very much fatigued Marianne; however, she was able in a day or two to go to the Pump-room

She there one morning happened to be sitting next a lady, who suddenly complained of a giddiness in her head, and was fainting away. Ethelinda, who had always hartshorn in her pocket, used endeavours to recover her; but, finding her continue very indifferent, Marianne desired she would make use of her carriage, which was in waiting, to convey her home, and at
the

the same time desired Ethelinda to go with her, as she happened to be quite alone.

They found that the lady lodged within a door of them, in Albemarle-row. She very thankfully accepted the offer, which, of course, brought about an acquaintance; and Mrs. Clairville, grateful for the attention that had been shewn her, frequently called upon Marianne for a quarter of an hour, who seemed very much pleased both with her and Mr. Clairville.

Marianne grew weaker every day; but one morning having been out to take the air, rather longer than usual, she suddenly complained of a sickness at her stomach, and was immediately after seized with a spitting of blood. Mr. Clairville happened to come in just at that moment, and, seeing Ethelinda very much alarmed, assured her it was not so unfavourable a symptom as it appeared.

“ My wife, (added he,) just after I married her, lost her only brother, Colonel Fitzwilliams

Fitzwilliams, who was slain in the West Indies. Her extreme affection for him, (added he,) with some other circumstances, rendered her at first almost distracted, and, among other bad effects it had upon her constitution, that was one. But she is now entirely recovered from it."

He was going on, when a faint scream from Marianne, who immediately fell back upon the sofa, called his attention towards her ; but she seemed so entirely gone, that he proposed getting the first medical help he could, and hurried away for that purpose.

Ethelinda, though greatly alarmed, too well knew the occasion of her fainting, and hoped she would soon recover, but was glad Mr. Clairville was gone. It was, however some time before Marianne shewed the least signs of life. At last, with a deep sigh, she opened her eyes, and exclaimed, "Where am I?—What is the matter?"

In a minute or two her recollection returned.—She burst into tears, and, pressing Ethelinda's hand, she exclaimed, "O Ethelinda! Mrs. Clairville is the sister—the beloved sister of my Fitzwilliams!—Oh! she will hate me!—hate the murderer of her dear brother!—Yet, surely, if she knew—if she knew my sufferings!—Weeks and months are past since the rising and setting sun have constantly witnessed my tears; and heaven, that knows my penitence, will accept it.—I think (continued the poor Marianne) that the sister of my Fitzwilliams would not refuse to see me.—Go to her, my friend, and intreat her, if she can endure the sight of me, to come immediately."

Ethelinda wished to dissuade her from what she thought would be so prejudicial, and intreated her at any rate to postpone an interview that was likely to be so affecting, until she was better able to bear it; but the attempt was in vain.

"I shall never be better able to bear it, (said Marianne ;) and do not refuse me the last request, perhaps, I shall ever make."

Ethelinda had too much feeling herself to combat the point any longer. She went to Mrs. Clairville, whom she found at home, and alone.

A scene ensued, little less distressing than that she had just left. Mrs. Clairville had understood that the Miss Williamson her brother was so much attached to, had married another person, and therefore, never having seen her, had not the least idea that this Miss Williamson was the same young lady.

When Mrs. Clairville was in some degree recovered, she consented to accompany Ethelinda, who went into the room first, to prepare Miss Williamson for her reception.

Marianne was lying on her sofa ; but, raising her head, asked if Mrs. Clairville would

would come. “She is here, (replied Ethelinda ;) but, for heaven’s sake, compose yourself.—You had better not see her just now.”

“Yes, I will see her this moment, (exclaimed Marianne,) bring her to me this instant.”

Ethelinda went into the next room, and returned with Mrs. Clairville. The instant Marianne beheld her, she started from her seat ; and, falling on her knees, before Mrs. Clairville,—“Forgive, forgive ! (cried she,) the murderer of your beloved brother !—and witness the state to which my falsehood has reduced me.—But, oh ! my crime is forgiven in heaven :—I feel it is.—Will not you, dear lady, likewise forgive a poor wretched——” penitent, she would have said ; but quite overcome by her exertions, she sunk down upon the floor, unable to utter another word.—Mrs. Clairville sunk down by her, and, taking her hand bathed it with her tears.

It was some time before she recovered in a sufficient degree to speak. At last, casting an eager look at Mrs. Clairville, "I go (in a low faint voice she said) to join my Fitzwilliams!—The blessed moment is almost arrived!—say, oh! say, that you forgive me."

"As I hope for future forgiveness myself, I do, (exclaimed Mrs. Clairville, though tears and sobs rendered her almost unable to articulate;) but, (continued she,) dear Miss Williamson, compose yourself."

"Do (cried Ethelinda) let us carry you to bed."

"Let me remain a little longer here," cried Marianne, in a still fainter voice. She was then silent a moment, but immediately after grasping Mrs. Clairville's hand, and seeming on a sudden to recover some additional strength, "What (said she) is become of that picture I returned with his letters? Oh! (continued she,) what destruction pursued me when I did so!—Where is that picture?—He gave it to me."

"I

"I have got it," returned Mrs. Clairville.

"Have you any other?" demanded Marianne.

"Yes; one drawn at the same time with your's."

"Where, where is mine?"

"I have it at my lodgings," replied Mrs. Clairville.

"Will you (cried Marianne, in a faltering voice, but steadily looking at Mrs. Clairville,) will you give it to me again?"

"Certainly I will."

"Fetch it me this moment,—this moment!" cried Marianne.

"Had you not better — pray do, my dear Miss Williamson,—wait till you are a little better?"

Marianne was now unable to speak, but put her hands together, and lifted them in a most imploring attitude, and with such a look as must have made its way to a heart of adamant.

Mrs.

Mrs. Clairville instantly rose, and went to her lodgings, for the picture. She was gone but a few minutes, during which time Marianne's eyes were turned up, her lips moved, and she seemed uttering some silent ejaculation.

When Mrs. Clairville returned with the picture in her hand, Marianne seized it ; and, after wildly kissing it, hid her face with her hands, and groaned seemingly in great agony ; but presently after said, more articulately than she had spoken for some time, " Oh ! beloved of my heart ! representative of my murdered Fitzwilliams ! oh ! he smiles on me ! " — Then, looking earnestly at the picture, " Never will I part with you again ! Promise (continued she, grasping Ethelinda's hand) that in life or death it shall never be taken from me."

Ethelinda sobbed so, that she could scarcely articulate the required promise. Marianne was again silent. A deadly paleness overspread her features, and, in a hurried manner,

manner, placing the picture next her heart, and turning towards Mrs. Clairville, "Tell me, (said she,) I conjure you by all that is sacred, tell me truly, what did my Fitzwilliams say of me?—Did he (continued she, gasping for breath) curse me?"

"O no, no! (cried Mrs. Clairville;) he blessed you!—I am sure he blessed you with his latest breath."

"Did he? (said she, half-whispering.) Oh! my Fitzwilliams!—my dead Fitzwilliams!—No! you are not dead!—I see him! (cried she, half-starting up,) I am forgiven! —Blessed———" A sudden convulsion seized her, and every effort to recover her again was ineffectual.

She laid near half an hour almost lifeless, and then with a sigh—for ever quitted a world, the vanities of which had nurtured her foibles till they overcame the native virtues of her heart, and made her their early victim.

Mrs.

Mrs. Clairville and Ethelinda were excessively shocked, not having any idea that the fatal event was so near at hand.

Mrs. Clairville was taken extremely ill, and was confined to her bed. Ethelinda suffered very deeply, but was forced to exert herself, and take such steps as were necessary upon the unhappy occasion. She wrote to Mrs. Sandford, and had an immediate answer from a young lady who was in the house, Mrs. Sandford being too much affected to write herself, and Mr. Sandford being from home. The letter mentioned that every necessary order would be given by a gentleman of Bristol, who had been written to, and that the remains of Miss Williamson would be conveyed to the family-vault.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

In which our Heroine's Situation is not much improved.

MELANCHOLY had again thrown her sable veil around our poor heroine. She no sooner seemed sheltered from one storm, than she became exposed to another.

She had conceived a real regard, not only founded on the feelings of pity, but on sincere esteem, for Miss Williamson; and her untimely death affected Ethelinda's spirits very greatly. She was confined to her room for many days afterwards, but still continued

in the lodging with Mrs. Freeman, who was a very worthy woman; and, finding that Ethelinda was anxious for a situation similar to that which she was unhappily deprived of, promised to inquire for one.

Ethelinda wished to avoid applying to Mrs. Dawson, lest Mr. Corbet should hear of it; and was very glad when Mrs. Freeman told her she had heard of a lady who wanted a companion, but believed she was not a woman of great elegance.

Ethelinda was not in a situation to make difficulties, and was better pleased just at present to be entirely out of the way of the fine world. She was deeply affected by the untimely death of Marianne, though it was an event she had long feared was inevitable. The suddenness of it shocked her extremely. Her spirits were greatly affected, but she hoped the change of scene would in some degree help to mend them.

Mrs. Freeman said that a sister of her's had mentioned the family she had spoken of. She understood they were rich, and supposed that was not an immaterial circumstance.

Ethelinda, considering the awkwardness of her present situation,—her fears of Mr. Corbet, and her being almost devoid of protection, was glad to embrace any opportunity of concealing herself from him, which she thought in such a family she should be enabled to do. She readily, therefore, accepted Mr. Freeman's offer of being introduced to Mrs. Figgins the following day.

She was accompanied by Mrs. Hales, sister to Mrs. Freeman. They found Mrs. Figgins alone. She was reading the newspaper, which she held with one hand, and was taking a pinch of Scotch snuff with the other.

She half-rose at their entrance, but, seeing Mrs. Hales, she presently re-seated herself, saying,

saying, "O Mrs. Hales! what, you have brought the young woman, have you?—Well, sit down."

"Yes, ma'am, (replied Mrs. Hales;) this is the young lady I mentioned."

"Well, (replied Mrs. Figgins,) you have lived I find with a young lady that is dead, but I hope that won't make you molly-choly, for I can't bear to have people low-spirited about me;—that's why I want some young person to keep me company; for, when my daughter is at home, she is as dull as a cat, though she is as frisky as a kitten when she is abroad.—Can you read tolerably well?"

"I shall be very glad to amuse you, madam, as well as I can," replied Ethelinda.

"And can you come immediately? (said Mrs. Figgins;) for I am to leave the Wells in a day or two, to go to see my daughter Spriggs, in Dorsetshire; and I must be in town in about a week or ten days. I don't like going such a round-about way, but they make such a fuss about it, that I can't

refuse 'em. I came here for my youngest daughter's health, but I shall not come so far again in a hurry; but the Deputy thought it would be of use to me as well Bet,—though he will be glad enough, I am sure, to have me back again, he must find it so lonesome without me.—Can you come to-morrow?—but what are your terms?—I hope not extravagant.”

“We will talk of that, madam, (replied our heroine,) hereafter.”

“No, no, (answered Mrs. Figgins,) I like these things should be settled, then one can have no jangling.—I am told twenty pounds a year is very handsome.”

Ethelinda never felt more mortified than to find herself in such a situation, as to be reduced to receive twenty pounds a year from such a woman. However, as concealment was her first object at present, she determined to submit to the terms for a short time.

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In a line so perfectly different from that she had been used to, and in such a family, she imagined she could not be easily found out. Accordingly, she promised to be with Mrs. Figgins the next day. When it arrived, she took leave of Mrs. Freeman, who would have persuaded her to wait till something apparently more eligible offered.

Ethelinda did not tell Mrs. Freeman exactly why she accepted of so unpromising a situation, but said she had particular reasons for wishing not to have it known where she was gone, and should be very thankful to her if she would not tell any one; and gave her to understand, that it was to avoid the offensive importunity of a gentleman that she wished to conceal herself. Mrs. Freeman, who was naturally sensible and good-humoured, acquiesced in her request, and promised secrecy.

Ethelinda went the next day to Mrs. Figgins. She found her engaged in a dispute with her daughter, who wanted to stay one day longer, for the sake of going to a
M 3 ball.

ball. Mrs. Figgins would not consent, and words ran very high between them.

“Why, (said Mrs. Figgins,) any living soul would think you came here for nothing but plays, and balls, and gadding; and, o’my conscience, I believe so too.—It is true you have flopp’d down some water in a morning, but the rest of the day you have been always gadding about:—and it don’t signify, Bet, I will not stay.—Your health is very well now, and I shall set off to-morrow.—Besides, your sister Spriggs expects me.”

“Dear ma’am, I am sure she won’t care whether we go one day or another.”

“What makes you, pray, Miss Bet, answer for your sister?—If she don’t care, I do. I’ll not stay fiddle faddling here any longer, for nothing but your whim-whams and fagaries,—so let’s have no more on’t.”

Miss Figgins was forced to submit, which she did with a very ill grace, grumbling to herself, that nobody was so kept under and treated as she was.

“Don’t

“ Don’t provoke me, Bet, (cried Mrs. Figgins,) muttering so to yourself. The more liberty some girls have, the less they deserve. I am sure, Miss Claremont, if you were as well off as Bet, you would’nt mutter and grumble at every thing as she does.”

“ Dear ma’am, (cried Miss Figgins,) what signifies applying to strangers in family-affairs. I have given up the point ; I can’t do any more.”

“ Given up the point ! — Fegs ! (exclaimed Mrs. Figgins,) things are come to a fine pass truly, when girls are to domineer over their parents.”

Miss Figgins pouted, but was at last reduced to silence. Her good-humour was not improved by the sight of Ethelinda, whose beauty she looked upon with a jealous eye ; for she had as much envy in her composition as ever fell to the share of any of her sex.

Her father had made a considerable fortune in trade, was a plain man, who piqued himself upon having done so well honestly, and was so tenacious upon that point, that he would never make any sort of allowance for the slightest deviation from it,—but would persecute any unfortunate object who fell under his suspicion, on that ground, with unrelenting severity.

His eldest daughter had married a Sir Ambrose Spriggs, a very conceited coxcomb, who had originally been bred to the law as an attorney's clerk ; but, coming into a good fortune by the death of an uncle, had contrived to get knighted ; and, at a water-drinking place, the summer before, had seen, and became attached to, the person and fortune of the elder Miss Figgins, who, from the moment she became Lady Spriggs, imagined herself a person of great fashion, and soon made her sister as conceited as herself.

She despised the vulgarity of both father and mother, but she made a point of her mother's
paying

paying her a visit before she returned to town, thinking it an attention that could not well be avoided, and that she should be able to bear the fatigue of it tolerably, as she was certain the visit would be a very short one.

Mrs. Figgins was not any ways changed by her daughter's exaltation, and had been too long accustomed to her old manners to adopt new ones. She was very positive in her opinion, very tenacious of her authority,—at times very violent,—and no one but Mr. Figgins had much weight with her.—She would occasionally fly into the most violent passions with him, but in the end he conquered, as it had always been his maxim never to be controlled by a woman, and she was very often forced most unwillingly to submit to it.

Ethelinda now saw a very different stile of preparations for a journey to what she had been used to. She had been employed in packing up the chief part of the day,

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jointly

jointly with Mrs. Figgins, and settling the bills, every one of which Mrs. Figgins contested; and declared people ought to have a mint of money, not to be ruined at such extortionate places, where every body tried to pick your pocket.

“Not (continued she) that I mind doing the thing handsomely when one’s out, but there is reason in every thing.”

“But really, mamma, (cried Miss Figgins, who was very much hurt at what she called parsimony,) I wonder at your squabbling so about a few shillings; it is so odd, and makes one look like nobody.—No genteel people do so.”

“More fools they, then, (cried Mrs. Figgins,) to be cheated through their noses!—that’s what makes them so poor; but I desire, Miss Claremont, you’ll clap on your hat, and take this bowl to the shop in the next street, and shew them that it is only a little cracked, though they have charged it to me as broke.”

Miss

Miss Claremont obeyed, though it was the first time she had ever been so employed, and she endeavoured to suppress those feelings that arose upon the occasion.

When the morning arrived, the party set off in the stage, which called at their door. Mrs. Figgins was a long time settling about the quantity of luggage she was allowed to carry, but insisted upon it, that they had a right to take as much in their laps as they could, and accordingly made her daughter and Ethelinda hold each of them a large parcel, while she conveyed a cold tongue and rolls in a basket on her's; declaring that they hurried them so at meals, that nobody had time to eat half enough."

The person who made the fourth happened to be a young officer in the guards, who was on a recruiting party.

It was not sufficiently light, when they first assembled in the coach, for him to distinguish his company, and he sat seemingly

asleep, for a considerable time. At last, a sudden jolt roused him, and, after rubbing his eyes, and looking out of the window, he turned them upon his companions, one after the other. — They were soon rivetted upon our heroine, not, however, with rudeness, but apparent surprise.

Mrs. Figgins broke silence by saying, “I am surprised you could sleep so long, sir, in such shocking roads, for they jolt me almost inside out.”

“The roads are but indifferent, indeed, madam, (replied the stranger,) and I was ignorant of the rudeness I have been guilty of, and the loss I have had.”

“As for that matter, (answered Mrs. Figgins,) I didn’t mean to say you had been rude, for people may do as they will, as to those things, in a stage-coach, though I own I think it more sociable to chat a little; and you have had no loss, for nobody has said a word all the way.”

“I hope, madam, (replied the stranger,) that, as the day advances, we shall be less

inclined to be engrossed by our own reflections."

"I hope so too, (answered the lady,) and I think, when one comes out to see the world a little, one should make observations upon things; or how is one to be improved by travelling; besides, it looks proud never to speak to one's fellow-travellers."

"It has often been thought, I believe, (said our heroine, who was fearful of any further censure, for not joining in the conversation,) that silent observation is most instructive."

"Well, I don't know how that can hold good, (rejoined Mrs. Figgins;) for how can people be improved by other people's thoughts, if they don't know what they are?"

"I meant that improvement will arise from one's own reflections."

"But, surely, (returned Mrs. Figgins,) that is having a very good opinion of one's self."

"I

“ I believe, (answered Ethelinda,) though it was not exactly what I then meant, that people would in general be thought better of by others, if they oftener reviewed themselves.”

“ If reviewing themselves will be of advantage, I am sure you girls do that enough now a-days.”

“ La ! mamma, (said Miss Figgins, who was roused by this sarcasm,) that was not what Miss Claremont meant ; and, besides, I dare say the old people, who find fault with us now, reviewed themselves quite as often, when they were young.”

“ And, when people have so much reason to be satisfied with themselves, (replied the stranger, bowing to the two young ladies,) it is a pardonable, if any, offence ; and no wonder it should be committed.”

“ Pray sir, (cried Mrs. Figgins,) are you going near Dorchester ?”

“ I

"I am going to Dorchester, madam."

"La ! so are we. Perhaps you know my daughter, Lady Spriggs, and my son-in-law, Sir Ambrose ?"

"No, madam, (returned the stranger,) I have not that honour : I never was in this part of the country before."

"Oh ! you never was here before.—You mean to make some stay, I suppose."

"That, madam, will depend upon accident. I am a foldier, and upon foldier's business."

"Oh ! recruiting I suppose, said Miss Figgins."

"Exactly so," resumed the stranger.

"Why, then, if you are a foldier, I suppose you have travelled a great deal."

"I certainly have travelled a great deal, though not in consequence of my occupation ; for my travels, on that account, have seldom been much farther than from one end of St. James's Street to the other."

"And

“And much better that you were not sent away further, (cried Mrs. Figgins;) for, as the Deputy says, I have no notion of keeping up wars that are to be attended with so much expence to every body. I suppose, by and by, they won’t let us breathe, or hear, or speak, without being taxed for it. They won’t let us eat, or see, or smell, without it already.” Upon which complaint, out came her snuff-box, and so much Scotch snuff fell from her fingers, that it set all the party but herself a sneezing.

“War, madam, (returned the stranger,) is certainly an evil, always to be avoided if possible; but there are circumstances, which, perhaps, are for a time only known to those in whose government we confide, that not only make war justifiable, but absolutely necessary.”

“Well, (returned the lady,) to be sure, it is not women’s business; but I am sure, if you were to talk to the Deputy, he would

would convince you, and make you think as he does."

The conversation then took a turn upon the passing objects, and nothing material occurred, till they arrived at the inn, where the stranger's attention was very pointedly directed to Ethelinda, much to the mortification of Miss Figgins, who was already struck by the appearance of the young soldier, which, to do him justice, was greatly in his favour.

The seeds of jealousy were, from this hour, sown in the heart of Miss Figgins, and the only comfort she had was the consideration that Ethelinda would very seldom be of the same party with her, as Mrs. Figgins went out very little. But she took very good care to let the stranger know her own superiority over Ethelinda, whom she considered as little better than a servant.

Nothing particular happened, and they arrived safe at Dorchester. From the
inn

inn they took a post-chaise to Sir Ambrose Spriggs, as Lady Spriggs did not choose that her carriage should be seen waiting for people who were so vulgar as to come in a stage-coach.

CHAP. XIII.

In which Narrowness of Mind—and Vulgarly of Manners—are productive of worse Consequences than merely the Shocks they continually give to the liberal and refined.

SIR Ambrose lived about three miles from Dorchester. They arrived just before dinner, and a day sooner than they were expected.

p. Lady Spriggs sent to desire they would come up stairs to her, as she was not dressed.

“ Bless my heart ! (cried Mrs. Figgins,) these stairs are so very slippery, I shall tumble

tumble down. Do, Miss Claremont, give us your arm."

Miss Figgins had not waited the slow movements of her mamma, but had already reached the room of Lady Spriggs, she was come to the door to receive Mrs. Figgins, who stopped to take breath, she said, and look round her.

When the first inquiries, &c. were over Mrs. Figgins was sitting herself down in an elbow chair, the cushion of which happening to be stuffed very high with down, and the lady, who was very bulky, sinking much lower than she expected, exclaimed, "Heavens! where the duce am I going!—Why Nelly, what is all this? Is it the fashion to have feather-beds on your chairs?"

Lady Spriggs laughed, and said, "To be sure, ma'am, these chairs are made rather differently from your's."

"Different, indeed! (replied Mrs. Figgins;)—but give me what I have been used to

to; for these great high cushions, and little chairs, with the arms so close together, when once one gets in, I don't think one can easily get out again."

That apprehension induced her to rise, and, in truth, the chair was in such close contact with the rich silk gown and the lady, that it was not without some difficulty they got clear of each other. "Look there now, Nell, (cried Mrs. Figgins;) why, can any thing be so ridiculous?—Why, your company ought all to be measured before they sit down. Do let me have one of the kitchen-chairs."

Lady Spriggs laughed excessively, and was just going to answer, when in came Sir Ambrose. He made his compliments to the ladies, and begged to know the cause of their being so merry.

"Why, it was only, Sir Ambrose, (replied his lady,) because my mamma had slump'd down on one of the chairs, and thought

thought it was giving way with her, and she was going to fall."

"Flump'd down, my dear Lady Spriggs! why do you use such a word?"

"Really I don't know (replied her ladyship) how it came into my head,—seeing my mamma do so, I believe."

"But I wish you, dear Lady Spriggs, never to forget,—that such words are never used by people of fashion."

"Well, it is very true, my dear Sir Ambrose. I don't know what possessed me to make use of it."

"What signifies (cried Mrs. Figgins, a little piqued at Sir Ambrose's manner) what words you make use of, so as you're understood, and fine words, as you call them, are not always the civilest."

"I beg your pardon, madam, for differing from you upon that subject. But, pray, (turning to Ethelinda,) am I not to have the honour of being introduced to this lady?"

"That lady (replied Mrs. Figgins) is a young woman who is come to live with me

as a companion ; for, as you've run away with Nelly, and Bet is always out, I am left so lonesome, that I wanted somebody to speak to,—and she has been very well recommended to me."

Sir Ambrose's respectful manner immediately changed to a kind of inquisitive stare, and then, turning to his wife, said " My dear, you know some of the officers, who are quartered at Dorchester, dine here to-day, and they have desired leave to bring one or two more, who are just arrived from town, upon the recruiting service,—guardsmen, — very *fine* gentlemen. I assure you.—Eliza must put on her best looks."

" Best looks ! (cried Mrs. Figgins ;) what ! for these red-coat sparks ! I have seen them guardsmen, as you call 'em, strut backwards and forwards in St. James's Street, when I went to my cousin Mrs. Hammer, the linen-draper, who is lately gone to live there. Their dress puts me in mind of our neighbour Mrs. Jenkins's maccaw bird, all scarlet, and blue, and yellow ; and I believe they

they bite every thing they come near, as much as that does. No, no, let's have no such gay sparks in our family, I beseech you."

"Really, ma'am, (replied Sir Ambrose,) you are very much mistaken. The officers of the guards are of the first families in England, — very elegant men."

"Yes, and very rich, I suppose."

"Why, that is as it may happen ;—but they are all considered as men of fashion."

"Fashion !—and what will fashion do? Will it make you warm when you are cold, —rich when you are poor,— or good when you are bad?"

"O dear ! yes, ma'am ; it will go a great way towards doing all that."

A loud ring at the door put a stop to the conversation, and Mrs. Figgins said she must go and clean herself a little. Ethelinda and Miss Figgins had retired before this conversation commenced.

As soon as the door was shut upon Mrs. Figgins, Sir Ambrose said, "My dear Lady Spriggs how unlucky it is that your mother happened to arrive to day ! for, to be sure, she is not calculated for our party."

"Indeed, my dear, (answered Lady Spriggs,) I think it very unlucky, as well as you, and wish we had had time to put off the party."

"But (replied he) as that is impossible, what can we do ?—I fear nothing, but to avoid any conversation that may set her a talking."

"Oh ! but that cannot be avoided, (replied Lady Spriggs ;) she will talk, let us do what we will. However, I will stay as little a while after dinner as possible."

More company coming, Sir Ambrose went to receive them, while Lady Spriggs finished her dress. She was naturally a very pretty woman, but, from having had a mongrel education, partly at an expensive school, where they had endeavoured to brush off the vulgarity she imbibed at

home, and partly in her family, where she was frequently reprimanded for the very refinement she had been put in the way of acquiring. When she married Sir Ambrose, she was a compound of vulgarity and finery ; but, as his passion was for show and elegance, which the thirty thousand pounds she brought gave him additional means of indulging. Her turn for gentility soon preponderated so much, as only to leave now and then a specimen in her manners and conversation of the old leaven; and, though she had not acquired the elegant manners of a woman of real fashion, she aimed at them so successfully, as frequently to pass off the false for current coin with tolerable success.

Lady Spriggs did not wish to go into the drawing-room till it was necessary, and therefore the ladies only assembled there just before dinner was announced.

Ethelinda had not heard what sort of a party was expected, and on entering the drawing
room,

room, was surprised to see it almost filled with red coats. Had she been aware so much company was to have been there, she would have declined appearing; but now it was too late to retire.

The officers were severally introduced by Sir Ambrose to the ladies, and Mrs. Figgins immediately recognized Captain Hartley, their stage-coach companion. He was a lively sensible young man, possessed of quick parts, and soon entered into the peculiarities of any character that came in his way.

He had been entertained during his journey with the vulgarisms of Mrs. Figgins, but pleased with the young ladies, especially Ethelinda. He had avoided giving himself the licence of being more than internally amused with the former.

Colonel Down was a complete man of fashion,—well born, well bred, and living in the first circles. He was looked up to, by Sir Ambrose, who was very solicitous of

his approbation, and very anxious to entertain him elegantly.

As soon as they were seated, Mrs. Figgins, turning to Capt. Hartley, said, "Why, if I am not mistaken, you are the gentleman that came in the stage-coach with us,—though dress makes such a difference, that I declare at first I hardly knew you for the same."

Sir Ambrose, shocked at her talking of travelling in a stage-coach before such a party, with a hope to stop the conversation, arose with quickness; and, taking her hand, said, "I believe, madam, you have not looked into the grounds. This window has a pretty view."

"Ah, ah! (replied Mrs. Figgins,) I dare say it is all very pretty; but I am old fashioned, and think it more to the purpose to have gardens made a little useful."

"It is very true, madam, (answered Capt. Hartley;) pleasure-gardens are, to be sure, not the most useful."

"Why,

“Why, I must own that I think it as well to lay out the ground in such a manner as it will produce something. You may equally walk in it as well as when it is all shrubberies, as they call them, and find something to eat as one goes along. I think spaliers has a very genteel look for a large garden, and produce such fine fruit.

“But (said Lady Spriggs) fashions change, madam, you know.”

“Yes, yes, they do change, indeed, child! But, as for fashion, we never much mattered that, you know, so as we had things a little comfortable. I remember the time when I should have thought it a great thing to have had a garden big enough to grow a little parsley and thyme; though your father used in former days to say, that, when he got above the world a little, he should like to have a country-house at Newington or Walworth. But I don’t know how it is, he does not seem to relish the thoughts of going so far from London.”

N 3

“Newington

“Newington and Walworth are not quite a day’s journey, madam, (cried Capt. Hartley,) are they, from town?”

“A day’s journey, Captain! (exclaimed Mrs. Figgins;) why, don’t you know better? Newington and Walworth are country places close to London, with charming rows of pretty houses, near to the roadside; and the stage goes backwards and forwards five or six times a day, which is very convenient; for one may go to town at any time for sixpence. For my part, I should like to have a country-house there very well, but the Deputy does not like to leave what he’s been used to so long, though sometimes I think the air would be good for his breath; but he’s a man of business, and likes to stick close to it, though he need not do it any more than his neighbours; but if folks do as they like, as the saying is, they’ll live the longer.”

“I don’t know how that may be, (replied Capt. Hartley,) but I am sure they’ll live the pleasanter.”

Sir

Sir Ambrose and his lady had frequently endeavoured to stop Mrs. Figgins's volubility; but finding it in vain, they tried to engage the Colonel, and the other officers, in different conversations—but observed, much to their mortification, that a bye-ear was given to every thing Mrs. Figgins said, and that it was all the gentlemen could do to refrain from laughing.—Much to the relief of Sir Ambrose and Lady Spriggs, dinner was announced.—Col. Down sat between Lady Spriggs and Mrs. Figgins, and, on the other side Lady Spriggs, Captain Hartley.—The dinner was a very handsome one, and well served.—Turtle at top and bottom, with a frame down the middle.

“Bless us! what a pretty thing that is,” cried Mrs. Figgins.—“It looks like the inside of a shew-box; but it seems to be of no use at dinner—for there's nothing in it fit to eat, is there?—Well, I've no notion of having any thing upon table only to look at.—I like to be better employed—feggs one should think—only I know better—that such

gim-cracks was put there only to save the dinner."

"But as that is not the case, mamma, what will you have?"

"Oh! my dear, help the company first; you wouldn't help me before them, I hope."

"Dear Ma'am," answered Lady Spriggs, "I am sure the gentlemen will not be helped before you."

"I tell you, Nelly, I know what's manners a little better, than to be served first in my own daughter's house."

Lady Spriggs saw it was in vain to contend; but one of the gentlemen prevailed upon Mrs. Figgins to have some turtle, which, upon tasting, she declared was very nice, indeed. She never had ate any but once before though, and that was (continued she, Nelly) when your father was made deputy of the ward.—He invited some of the liverymen to dine with him, and he bespoke some turtle at the London.—I thought, for my part, that they had turtle enough—for they always have turtle and venison

venison too at the company's dinners, and all sorts of rarities."

"Do, pray, Madam," cried Lady Spriggs, "eat your dinner—really you don't eat at all."

"O yes, child, never fear me—though I shall be glad to have a bit of plain meat, if you have any—for I'm not used to these outlandish dishes."

"There is fish coming, Ma'am."

"Oh! well, well—I'll have a bit of fish. A general conversation then ensued.—The attention of the gentlemen, except when they were diverting themselves with Mrs. Figgins, was evidently pointed towards Ethelinda.

There was likewise a very agreeable looking young woman, a Miss Patterson, who was distantly related to Sir Ambrose, and this poor girl, being an orphan left entirely destitute, resided with him.—She was made to feel the weight of the obligation conferred upon her every hour of her life; nor had she any indulgence beyond that of a common ser-

vant, except the being made useful in the parlour, instead of the kitchen.

This poor girl, half broken hearted, and quite broken spirited, could not refrain from letting Ethelinda know her unhappiness during a walk they took together in the evening, and our Heroine sincerely pitied, tho' she could not relieve her.

But, to return to the dinner party.—Captain Hartley, desiring Mrs. Figgins would help him to some of the dish that stood next her, she immediately, with her own knife and fork, cut through it, and exclaimed, “Bless me, I thought this was a chicken :—Why, Captain Hartley, it's nothing but a lump of stuffing.—Will you have any of it?”

“Put a knife and fork in the dish,” said Sir Ambrose, turning to the servant.

“Oh ! bless us, I forget me,” cried Mrs. Figgins ;—“it isn't the fashion to help with one's own knife and fork.”

Upon

Upon spruce-beer being called for, and very much commended, "Do let us," said Mrs. Figgins, "taste that stuff; though, 'till lately, I never heard of people's taking it, but for an inward bruise."

"I am sure you won't like it, Ma'am," cried Lady Spriggs."

"Well, no harm will be done, if I don't. I may taste it, daughter, I suppose."

A glass of it was of course brought her;—but she had not swallowed two mouthfulls, before she began sputtering, and making faces, exclaiming, "Oh! nasty—shocking bad:—It is worse than any Doctor's stuff—It is the fashion too, to pretend to drink this for pleasure, is it," and she put it down in such a hurry, that, missing the salver, it went all over Col. Down's coat.

"Lack-a-day!" cried Mrs. Figgins;—"I ask your pardon, Sir; but I'll wipe it directly," and out she pulled her coloured pocket handkerchief, declaring it was quite clean.—She began wiping away—but the Colonel, taking a napkin, assured her it was of no consequence, and begged she would

give herself no trouble about it.—Sir Ambrose was shocked almost to death, and Lady Spriggs seemed ready to cry—but the politeness of Col. Down soon brought things round again.

Miss Figgins was charmed with Captain Hartley, but he was perfectly inattentive to her desire of attracting him, and paid the most assiduous court to Ethelinda; though she, as far as it was possible, avoided his attentions, and lamented the situation she was exposed to, and the curiosity which she plainly excited.—During the course of dinner, Mrs. Figgins continually hurt the feelings of Sir Ambrose and Lady Spriggs.—She ate every thing, even pease and jelly, with her knife, though Sir Ambrose ordered her a spoon, and constantly helped herself to salt with the point of her knife.—When the desert came, Lady Spriggs asked her if she would have any ice.

“Those,” said she, “are gim-cracks I’m not used to;—but let’s have a bit;” when,
6
upon

upon putting a large piece into her mouth, she cried out, "Oh! oh! I can't bear it.—I'll be shot if ever I taste this confounded thing again."

Every body smiled, and Captain Hartley could not refrain from laughing.

"You may laugh, Sir," cried Mrs. Figgins;—"but I am sure my teeth won't be well again to night."

He begged her pardon, but said, "there was something so natural in her manner, that it hit his fancy."—Sir Ambrose laughed, tho' evidently mortified; and poor Lady Spriggs was in a continual fidget.

The conversation turning upon politics, and Sir Ambrose, speaking rather in favour of the war, Mrs. Figgins exclaimed, "Why, how now, Sir Ambrose; what has made you turn tail—you used to agree with the deputy."

"Different circumstances, Ma'am," returned Sir Ambrose, "sometimes occasion an alteration of sentiment."

"Well

“ Well, I don’t know what circumstances have happened to make you shift about so ; for all of a sudden, your notions seem to be turned quite topsy turvey.”

Sir Ambrose shuffled off the attack ; but the fact was, that Lord Orfield had taken a house within two miles of him, and had already invited him and Lady Spriggs to a ball and supper, and shewed an inclination to be upon terms of some intimacy ;—and as his Lordship was always a strenuous advocate for all ministers, he had entirely undermined Sir Ambrose’s patriotism.

There was to be an assembly at Dorchester two days afterwards.—Captain Hartley hoped the ladies would honour it with their company ;—but Mrs. Figgins said, she should positively stay no longer than the next day. She had family business to do at home, and the deputy expected her, and she certainly should not stay. Miss Figgins begged very hard :—And surely (continued she) it can make no difference, and papa won’t mind if you stay one more day.”

“ I

"I tell you, Bet," replied Mrs. Figgins, "say no more about it; your father is to meet us at the stage; and a fine thing it would be, if he was to come, and not find us there; to be sure he'd be frightened out of his wits, and think somewhat had happened to us: and, besides that, next week is our great wash, and I want to be at home."

These cogent reasons silenced the whole party, and very much disturbed the elegant feelings of Lady Spriggs, who, as soon as it was possible, moved from the table, and taking her sister into her own room, burst into tears, declaring she should be the laughing stock of the whole place. Miss Figgins joined in lamenting the shocking vulgar manners of her mother.

"But oh!" continued she, "no words, my dear sister, can describe what I suffered the evening we went to Mrs. Plumkins's rout, at such a fine party."

"Fine," cried Lady Spriggs; "only city people, I suppose."

"Oh!

“ Oh ! dear yes,” returned Miss Figgins, “ a great many from t’other end of the town, I assure you. The Alderman, you know, means to be a candidate for the city, and is doing all he can to keep up his interest. I had no notion mamma would go, but papa made such a fuss about it, to please his friend the Alderman, I believe, that she at last agreed to go ”

“ Do, my dear,” said Lady Spriggs, “ tell me all about it, though I know I shall almost die with vexation, to think how she exposes us all.”

“ Oh ! sister, you are got out of the way ; I only bear the brunt of it now.”

“ Well, but do go on,” said Lady Spriggs.”

“ Why,” continued Miss Figgins, “ we set off long before any body else would have thought of going, and, as we were going down Thames-street, the axle-tree of the coach broke, and down we came, with such a flump.—Mamma screamed so, I am sure they might have heard her at St. Paul’s ;—they soon, however, got us out ;—but, unluckily,

luckily, it was so horrid dirty, that I was over my shoes in a moment ; and my head, I am sure, was so shook, that it must have been quite a figure.—Mamma was so scared, that she never thought of holding up her gown out of the dirt, and so it was in such a condition, you never saw any thing like it. She was so angry, and so scolded the coachman for not looking better to the carriage, that there was soon quite a mob about us ;—but as we had only a few doors to go to the Alderman's, mamma determined to walk there, which we did, she scolding the servant all the way ;—and what, with fright and scolding, she was quite out of breath when we got in ; and I saw the servants laugh at us, as well they might.—Mamma asked if she could not get a little soap and water to clean herself, and we were shewn into a room where some of the maids were making tea ; but mamma asked if Mrs. Plumkins was among them.—I whispered her, that it was only the maids. They stared at us so, you can't think.—Mamma sat herself down, and said, she did not often come to such places, and truly she had

had much better have staid away now.—One of the maids, who looked quite like a fine lady—“To be sure,” said Lady Spriggs, “all people of fashion make a point of their own maids being genteelly dressed.—Don’t you observe how smart mine is—but go on, my dear.”

“Well,” continued Miss Figgins, “after the gown had been rubbed and scrubbed, and washed———.”

“Pray how was she dressed,” interrogated Lady Spriggs.

“Oh! you never, no, never, saw such a figure in your life, for she would not be advised by me.—She had a new gown for the occasion, rose coloured satin; and the mantua-maker persuaded her to trim it with silver;—she had not a bit of powder in her hair; but it was frizzed so full, that it looked like a great black wig; and in her cap she stuck those frightful vulgar French-bead pins, all in a row, and pinned a new coloured shawl over her handkerchief.—She had taken her gloves in her hand, to put them on just as we got to the Alderman’s, that they might
not

not be foiled ; but unluckily she dropped them in her fright, so that she was forced to go up without any.—I would have had her sent and bought a pair, but she said she would tell the Alderman's lady how it happened, and she was sure it was excuse enough ; but unluckily she had drunk rather more porter than usual, and was in one of her most obstinate fits ; so in spite of all I could say, for I wanted her sadly to go home again, up we went ;—but when we got into the room, I thought I should have fainted ; every body's eyes were upon us.—Mrs. Plumkins, you know, is so very elegant, and stared at us so, without recollecting who we were, and seemed quite astonished.—My mamma said, loud enough for every body to hear her, “ Bless me, I didn't know there was such a sort of company, or I would have gone home again.”

The Alderman then saw us, and, coming up, very civilly introduced us to Mrs. Plumkins, and she made an apology for not speaking to us sooner.

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“ I

“ I hope you’ll excuse my having no gloves, Madam,” said mamma; “ but I have been frightened to death almost, and my gown is quite spoiled, as you may see;” and she then began telling all about our accident. Mrs. Pumkins, I saw, could scarcely help laughing. When she asked mamma to play at cards, she cried out, that she didn’t understand any of the new fashioned games, but could play a little at whist—and positively down she sat. I was quite in a perspiration; for she always blundered, and was going to deal with the wrong cards, saying, as an excuse, that she had not been used to two packs—and she always wetted her thumb to make the cards slip, and kept her coloured pocket handkerchief and snuff-box on the table by her.”

“ Bless me, my dear,” exclaimed Lady Spriggs, “ I wonder how you could possibly bear it.”

“ Oh! you ha’nt heard half yet.—When the lemonade came, she mistook it for punch, and, upon tasting it, said she was quite disappointed.

appointed. The Alderman happened to be close by her—for indeed every body crowded round her to laugh—I would have kept off——.”

“Kept off, indeed,” said Lady Spriggs; “I would not have been there for the world.”

“Oh! but,” continued Miss Figgins, “two or three times when she missed me, she called as out as loud as she could, Bet, why do you run away—do, prithee, stay here.”

“So I did’nt dare to go far. The Alderman, finding she wished for punch, absolutely sent for some, and, I believe, they made it monstrous strong for fun; for it set her talking to every body at such a rate—I was ready to die—she drank three very large glasses, as they told her it would do her good after her fright.—I assure you, that young Mr. Plumkins is quite a fine gentleman;—he came up, and talked to me a great while; seemed to know all about the plays, and belongs to the London assembly, I find.”

“Only

“ Only a city fine gentleman, of course,” cried Lady Spriggs ; “ I hope, my dear, you’ll look higher—but go on.”

“ Well,” continued Miss Figgins, “ when the game was over, mamma thought she had been playing sixpences, and having lost four points, offered two shillings. The lady she gave it to, put it under the candlestick.

“ Why do you put the money there ?” said mamma.

“ You gave that for your cards, I suppose, Ma’am ; so I put it to the rest.”

“ For the cards !” cried mamma ;—“ bless my soul, do you think I mean to give all that for card-money, though I know it’s the fashion to give something.”

“ I gave her a jog, and whispered, “ that’s what every body puts, mamma ”

“ Pray, how should you know ?” cried she :—“ Mind your own business, I desire. Why, I meant that to pay for my losses.”

“ Ma’am,” said the lady, “ you have lost a rubber of four.”

“ Well,” returned she, “ and there is two shillings—that’s four sixpences.”

“ Sixpences !

“Sixpences! Ma’am,” exclaimed the lady, bursting out into a laugh; “why we are playing crowns.”

“*Crowns!*” repeated mamma;—“what! have I lost four crowns.—I’m sure I wouldn’t have played at that rate, if I had known it;” and, looking as red as fire (you know she never, at the best of times, can bear losing) exclaimed, “Well, I’ve had enough of it—who’s will may play for me, and pulling out a guinea, put it down almost in a rage, and immediately got up.—A glass more punch very opportunely was brought her.—When she had drunk it up, “Pray, good man,” said she to the servant out of livery, who looked like a gentleman, “is my carriage come?”

“Whose carriage, Ma’am, shall I inquire for?”

“Why, Mr. Deputy Figgins’s,” cried she.

“I really, my dear, thought every body in the room had their eyes fixed upon us, and seemed all in a titter.—I really could hardly help crying. At last, however, we got away; but such a noise and grumbling as she made
all

all the way down stairs, and for an hour afterwards, surely never was heard ; and I am resolved nothing upon earth shall ever tempt me to go to any genteel party with her again. I always, if nothing else will serve, shall pretend to be sick."

The conversation between the sisters was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Figgins, who had been walking with Miss Paterfon and Ethelinda.

Sir Ambrose and Lady Spriggs were in their hearts very glad when the morning arrived that Mrs. Figgins, with her daughter and Ethelinda, set off in the stage for London, where they arrived, without any particular occurrence having happened on the road.

Ethelinda now found herself an inmate in a family, whose life and manners differed from every thing she had ever been accustomed to.

The

The heads of it had acquired wealth by degrees, but without any idea of the common comforts that in general accompany it. They lived constantly in the same room, piqued themselves upon having plenty, and the best sort at their table, but it was served upon a dirty table-cloth, and in a dirty stile, and every thing about them was uncomfortable to one who had been used to the refinements of elegance.

Miss Figgins detested our heroine, and was continually throwing out sneers at her.—Nor did Mrs. Figgins like her much better; for it was impossible Ethelinda's elegant manners and understanding could have any charms for persons so totally different.

Miss Figgins had prevailed upon her father to let her have a maid to herself. She took one recommended by her milliner, who very soon insinuated herself into her lady's favour, and soon found that she could not take a more ready way of doing so, than by censuring Ethelinda.

Several trifling things had been lately lost in the house, and Smith gave some broad hints to Miss Figgins, that those people who were set up as companions, though with no more pretensions to it than others, were often very slippery ; and, for her part, she had her reasons to herself, for thinking some people were no better than they should be.

As Mrs. Figgins was sitting reading the newspaper the next day, and Ethelinda at work, Miss Figgins ran into the room in great agitation, and exclaimed, “ Mamma, I have lost my diamond pin ! ”

“ Lost ! (answered Mrs. Figgins,) how should you have lost it child ?—Why, you wore it the day before yesterday.”

“ Yes, mamma ; but it is lost,—stolen, I believe, for Smith cannot find it any where ;—and the gold locket, too ! Somebody must have taken them.”

“ Have you hunted every where ? ” interrogated Mrs. Figgins.

‘ Every

“Every where. We have not left a place unsearched ; and Smith remembers to have seen them on the table after breakfast yesterday morning, but has never set eyes on them since. About an hour ago, she asked me if I had not put them up, and was frightened to death, when I told her I knew nothing about them, and thought she had put them away.”

Just then Mr. Figgins came in, and, upon being told the affair, said he would find out the thief, let it cost him what it would. “For my part, (continued he,) there is nothing I hate so much as dishonesty, and think it never should be screened,—or how are folks to go on?—I thank my conscience, nobody can accuse me of having got my penny dishonestly, and therefore I am always for punishing of thefts.”

Ethelinda said it was to be hoped the things were only mislaid, and would be found again.

Miss Figgins said, whoever had mislaid them, would do well to find them, or she

hoped her papa would take some step to bring such wickedness to light.

“ Yes, yes, girl, (replied Mr. Figgins,) I promise you no such doings will be tolerated by me.”

“ Pray, Miss Claremont, (said Miss Figgins,) be so good as to step for me to Mrs. Hallet’s, and get me a gauze-handkerchief, to make a turban-cap of, this evening ; for poor Smith is in such a taking about this affair, that she cannot go.”

Ethelinda said she would certainly go, and went out of the room to get her cloak. As soon as she was gone, Miss Figgins declared she should be very sorry to think ill of any body, but she had the strongest suspicions in the world that Miss Claremont was not so good as she should be.

“ She has always had (continued she) a nasty reserved manner, which is very suspicious ; and I have more reasons than I choose to tell why I think so.”

Mr. Figgins declared, if that were the case, she ought to be brought to justice.

Miss

though I believe every body is not what they appear."

" I guess who you mean, (said Mrs. Figgins ;) but I had her well recommended by a person I knew ;—but there's no knowing any body."

" No, ma'am, that's for certain. But, for my part, I think, if I may advise, the best way will be to search every body, and all our trunks."

" I think that would not be amiss, (said Mr. Figgins ;) and no honest person can object to it."

It was accordingly resolved upon. When Ethelinda returned, she was very much distressed at so derogating a suspicion. The colour rose in her face, and she said it was to her a very humiliating idea, and implied a suspicion that could not fail of hurting her very much.

Ethelinda

Ethelinda had other reasons for not choosing to have her drawers searched, as Lord Beaufort's picture was lock'd up in one of them; and, though she was certain that none of the family knew him, it might lead to questions unpleasant for her to answer. She hoped, therefore, such violent measures would not be pursued, and suggested that advertising might be a proper expedient.

Mr. Figgins, the leading feature of whose character was obstinacy, was the more determined by her objections. Smith was called in, who immediately declared, that, as her conscience was clear, she was ready to stand search.

They accordingly acted the farce of emptying her pockets. Mrs. Figgins then advanced to Ethelinda, who, shocked at the degradation she received, burst into tears.

Nothing however was found ; but many innuendos thrown out, that it was very extraordinary

ordinary, that a person who was innocent should not be glad to have it proved.

The whole party then went into Ethelinda's room, and insisted upon having the key of her drawers.

The first they opened yielded them no satisfaction ; but, in the second, wrapped up in one of her gloves, was the gold locket.

“ There now ! (cried Miss Figgins ;) the diamond-pin is not far off.”

Ethelinda, almost petrified, sunk into a chair, that stood near her.

“ You vile slut ! (cried Mr. Figgins,) where is the pin ?”

Ethelinda, scarcely able to articulate, declared she knew not how the locket came there.

“ Confess

“Confess at once (exclaimed Mrs. Figgins,) and throw yourself upon our mercy. Say, what have you done with the pin?”

She protested that she was innocent, and ignorant of the whole affair. “But (continued she) I know not what I have done, to induce any one to oppress me with such cruelty, and make me appear guilty.”

Mr. Figgins’s passion increased, and he declared if she would not discover the diamonds, she should go that instant to prison. The more she denied the fact, the more violent he grew, and said she ought to be made an example of, to warn other folks from taking such sort of people into their houses.

Deaf to all her prayers, it was not in her power to prevent him from sending for a constable, who very soon arrived, and they put her into a hackney-coach, more dead than alive.

Smith.

Smith went likewise as an evidence.— They swore so positively to finding the locket in her custody, that she was committed to prison. Every thing she endeavoured to say in her defence was treated with ridicule. The justice said she must, at any rate, submit to confinement for the present ; and, if she could find bail, she might soon be released.

END OF VOL. II.

